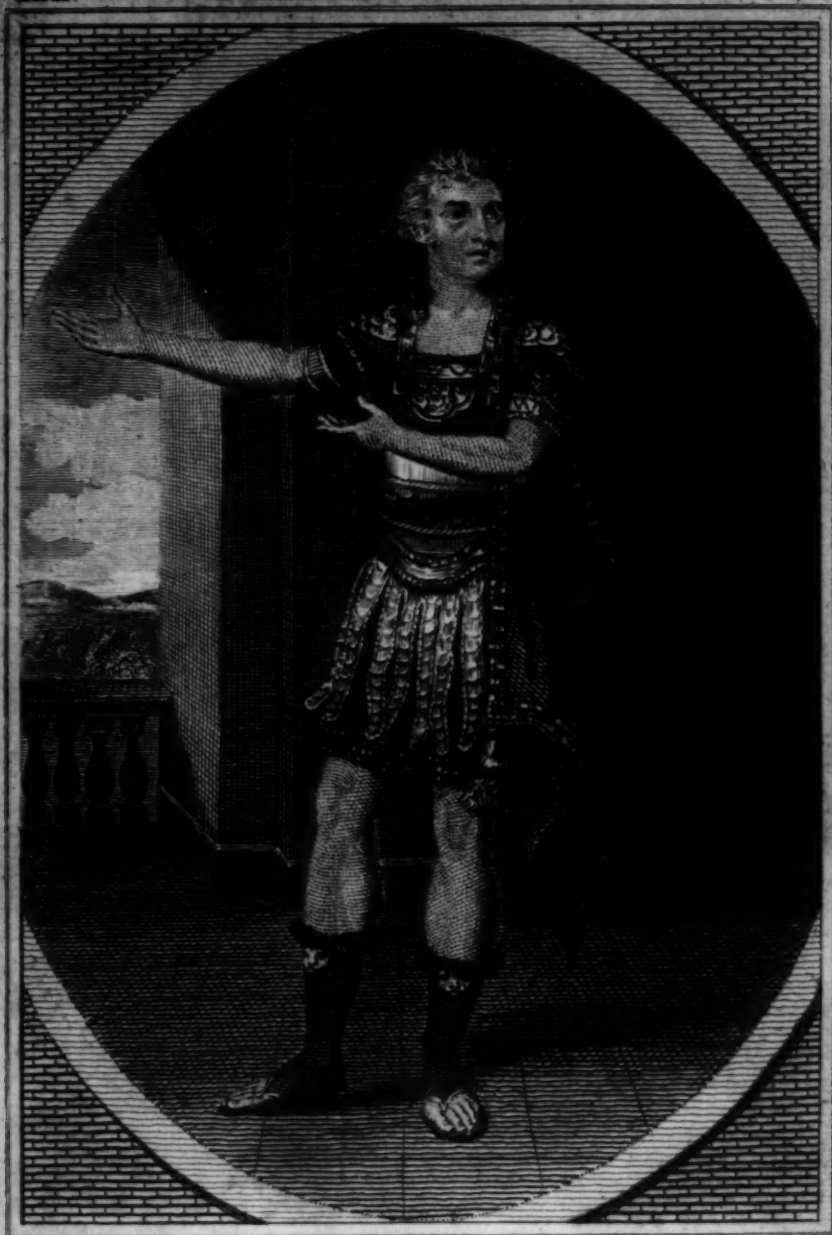


Act II.

PHÆDRA & HIPPOLITUS.



Graham del.

Long sc.

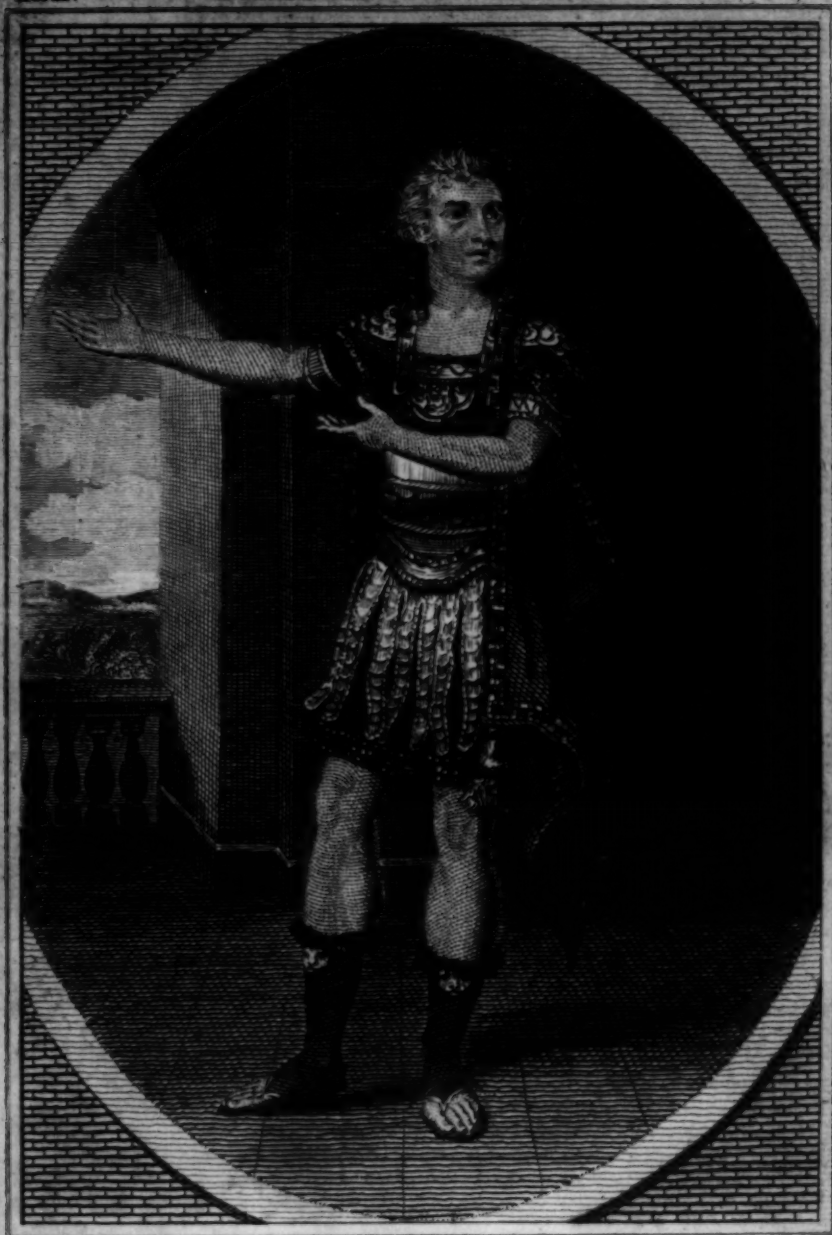
M. HOLMAN as HIPPOLITUS.

*Hip. His idle horn on fragrant myrtles hung,
His arrows scatter'd, and his bow unstrung:*

London, Printed for G. Cawthorn, British Library, Strand, Aug^o 20 1796.

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PHÆDRA & HIPPOLYTUS

*Then then Hippolytus flew in to aid me
collecting all himself & rising to I blow
He launch'd the whistling spear*

Act I

Sc 7



PHÆDRA 11775.6.3
AND
HIPPOLITUS. 1-6.

A
TRAGEDY.

BY MR. EDMUND SMITH. 1c

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

As performed at the

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,

By Permission of the Manager.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation
and those printed in Italics are Additions of the Theatres.

LONDON:

Printed for, and under the Direction of,
GEORGE CAWTHORN, British Library, STRAND.

M DCC XCVI. 10

PHOTOGRAPH

AND

HISTORICAL RECORD

THE

BRITISH MUSEUM



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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES,

LORD HALLIFAX.

MY LORD,

AS soon as it was made known that your lordship was not displeased with this Play, my friends began to value themselves upon the interest they had taken in its success; I was touched with a vanity I had not before been acquainted with, and began to dream of nothing less than the immortality of my work.

And I had sufficiently shewn this vanity in inscribing this Play to your lordship, did I only consider you as one to whom so many admirable pieces, to whom the praises of Italy, and the best Latin poem since the Aeneid, that on the peace of Ryswick, are consecrated. But it had been intolerable presumption to have addressed it to you, my lord, who are the nicest judge of poetry, were you not also the greatest encourager of it; to you who excel all the present age as a poet, did you not surpass all the preceding ones as a patron.

For in the times when the Muses were most encouraged, the best writers were countenanced, but never advanced; they were admitted to the acquaintance of the greatest men, but that was all they were to

expect. The bounty of the patron is no where to be read of but in the works of the poets, whereas your lordship's will fill those of the historians.

For what transactions can they write of which have not been managed by some who were recommended by your lordship? It is by your lordship's means, that the universities have been real nurseries for the state; that the courts abroad are charmed by the wit and learning, as well as the sagacity of our ministers; that Germany, Switzerland, Muscovy, and even Turkey itself begins to relish the politeness of the English; that the poets at home adorn that court, which they formerly used only to divert; that abroad they travel, in a manner very unlike their predecessor Homer; and with an equipage he could not bestow, even on the heroes he designed to immortalize.

And this, my lord, shews your knowledge of men as well as writings, and your judgment no less than your generosity; you have distinguished between those, who, by their inclinations or abilities, were qualified for the pleasure only, and those that were fit for the service of your country; you made the one easy, and the other useful: You have left the one no occasion to wish for any preferment, and you have obliged the public by the promotion of the others.

And now, my lord, it may seem odd that I should dwell on the topick of your bounty only, when I might enlarge on so many others; when I ought to take

DEDICATION.

notice of that illustrious family from which you are sprung, and yet of the great merit which was necessary to set you on a level with it, and to raise you to that House of Peers, which was already filled with your relations; when I ought to consider the brightness of your wit in private conversation, and the solidity of your eloquence in public debates; when I ought to admire in you the politeness of a courtier, and the sincerity of a friend; the openmess of behaviour which charms all who address themselves to you, and yet that hidden reserve which is necessary for those great affairs in which you are concerned.

To pass over all these great qualities, my lord, and insist only on your generosity, looks as if I solicited it for myself; but to that I quitted all manner of claim when I took notice of your lordship's great judgment in the choice of those you advance; so that all at present my ambition aspires to, is, that your lordship would be pleased to pardon this presumption, and permit me to profess myself, with the most profound respect,

Your Lordship's most humble,

And most obedient Servant,

EDM. SMITH.

Dec. 1709.

PROLOGUE.

BY MR. ADDISON.

*LONG has a race of heroes fill'd the stage,
That rant by note, and through the gamut rage;
In songs, and airs, express their martial fire,
Combat in trills, and in a feuge expire;
While, lull'd by sound, and undisturb'd by wit,
Calm and serene you indolently sit;
And from the dull fatigue of thinking free,
Hear the facetious fiddles repartee:
Our homespun authors must forsake the field,
And Shakespeare to the soft Scarletti yield.*

*To your new taste the poet of this day
Was by a friend advis'd to form his play:
Had Valentin, musically coy,
Shun'd Phædra's arms, and scorn'd the proffer'd joy,
It had not mov'd your wonder to have seen
An eunuch fly from an enamour'd queen:
How would it please, should she in English speak,
And could Hippolitus reply in Greek?
But he, a stranger to your modish way,
By your old rules must stand or fall to-day,
And hopes you will your foreign taste command,
To bear, for once, with what you understand.*

STANDARD SPANISH

Men

Thames, King of Corsica
Hercules, his son, in love with Iphigeneia
Lycon, Minister of State
Catagoras, Captain of the Guards
Mr. Barry
Mr. Lewis
Mr. Lee
Mr. Allen

Women

Phaon, Thesus's Queen, in love with Hippolytus
Iphigeneia
Lemon, a captive Princess, in love with Hippolytus
Mr. Barry
Mr. Bailey

Other Characters

Dramatis Personæ.

Men.

| | | |
|---|-------|------------|
| THESEUS, King of Crete, | - - - | Mr. Barry. |
| HIPPOLITUS, his Son, in love with Ismena, | | Mr. Lewis. |
| LYCON, Minister of State, | - - - | Mr. Lee. |
| CRATANDER, Captain of the Guards, | - | Mr. Aikin. |

Women.

| | | |
|--|---------|---------------|
| PHÆDRA, Theseus's Queen, in love with | | |
| Hippolitus, | - - - - | Mrs. Barry. |
| ISMENA, a captive Princess, in love with | | |
| Hippolitus, | - - - | Mrs. Bulkley. |

Guards, Attendants.



PHÆDRA AND HIPPOLITUS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

CRATANDER and LYCON enter.

Lycon.

'Tis strange, Cratander, that the royal Phædra
Should still continue resolute in grief,
And obstinately wretched:
That one so gay, so beautiful and young,
Of godlike virtue and imperial power,
Should fly inviting joys, and court destruction.

Crat. Is there not cause, when lately join'd in marriage,
To have the king her husband call'd to war?
Then for three tedious moons to mourn his absence,
Nor know his fate?

Lyc. The king may cause her sorrow,
But not by absence: oft I've seen him hang
With greedy eyes and languish o'er her beauties,

She from his wide, deceiv'd, desiring arms
Flew tasteless, loathing ; whilst dejected Theseus,
With mournful loving eyes pursu'd her flight,
And dropt a silent tear.

Crat. Hal this is hatred,
This is aversion, horror, detestation:
Why did the queen, who might have cull'd mankind,
Why did she give her person and her throne
To one she loath'd ?

Lyc. Perhaps she thought it just
That he should wear the crown his valour sav'd.

Crat. Could she not glut his hopes with wealth and
honour,

Reward his valour, yet reject his love ?
Why, when a happy mother, queen and widow,
Why did she wed old Theseus ? while his son,
The brave Hippolitus, with equal youth
And equal beauty might have fill'd her arms.

Lyc. Hippolitus (in distant Scythia born,
The warlike Amazon, Camilla's son)
'Till our queen's marriage, was unknown to Crete :
And sure the queen could wish him still unknown :
She loaths, detests him, flies his hated presence,
And shrinks and trembles at his very name.

Crat. Well may she hate the prince she needs must
fear ;

He may dispute the crown with Phædra's son.
He's brave, he's fiery, youthful, and belov'd ;
His courage charms the men, his form the women ;
His very sports are war.

Lyc. Oh! he's all hero, scorns th' inglorious ease
 Of lazy Crete, delights to shine in arms,
 To wield the sword, and launch the pointed spear;
 To tame the gen'rous horse, that nobly wild
 Neighs on the hills, and dares the angry lion;
 "To join the struggling coursers to his chariot,
 "To make their stubborn necks the rein obey,
 "To turn, or stop, or stretch along the plain."
 Now the queen's sick, there's danger in his courage.—
 'He must be watch'd.'

Be ready with your guards.—I fear Hippolitus.

[*Exit Crat.*]

Fear him! for what? poor silly virtuous wretch!
 Affecting glory, and contemning power:
 Warm without pride, without ambition brave;
 A senseless hero, fit to be a tool
 To those whose godlike souls are turn'd for empire.
 An open honest fool, that loves and hates,
 And yet more fool to own it. He hates flatterers,
 He hates me too; weak boy, to make a foe
 Where he might have a slave. I hate him too,
 But cringe, and flatter, fawn, adore, yet hate him.
 Let the queen live or die, the prince must fall.

ISMENA enters.

What, still attending on the queen, Ismena?
 O charming virgin! O exalted virtue!
 Can still your goodness conquer all your wrongs?
 Are you not robb'd of your Athenian crown?
 Was not your royal father Pallas slain?

And all his wretched race, by conqu'ring Theseus?
 And do you still watch o'er his consort Phædra?
 And still repay such cruelty with love?

Ism. Let them be cruel that delight in mischief;
 I'm of a softer mould; poor Phædra's sorrows
 Pierce thro' my yielding heart, and wound my soul.

Lyc. Now thrice the rising sun has cheer'd the world,
 Since she renew'd her strength with due refreshment;
 Thrice has the night brought ease to man, to beast,
 Since wretched Phædra clos'd her streaming eyes:
 "She flies all rest, all necessary food,
 "Resolv'd to die, nor capable to live."

Ism. But now her grief has wrought her into
 phrenzy;
 The images her troubled fancy forms
 Are incoherent, wild; her words disjointed:
 Sometimes she raves for musick, light, and air.
 Nor air, nor light, nor musick, calm her pains;
 Then with extatic strength she springs aloft,
 And moves and bounds with vigour not her own.

Lyc. Then life is on the wing; then most she sinks
 When most she seems reviv'd. Like boiling water,
 That foams and hisses o'er the crackling wood,
 And bubbles to the brim; ev'n then most wasting,
 When most it swells.

Ism. My lord, now try your art;
 Her wild disorder may disclose the secret
 Her cooler sense conceal'd; "the Pythian goddess
 Is dumb and sullen, 'till with fury fill'd
 "She spreads, she rises, growing to the sight,

" She stares, she foams, she raves ; the awful secrets
 " Burst from her trembling lips, and ease the tortur'd
 maid ;"

But Phædra comes, ye gods, how pale, how weak !

PHÆDRA and Attendants enter.

Phad. Stay, virgins, stay ; I'll rest my weary steps :
 My strength forsakes me, and my dazzled eyes
 Ake with the flashing light ; my loosen'd knees
 Sink under their dull weight. Support me, Lycon.
 Alas ! I faint.

Lyc. Afford her ease, kind Heav'n !

Phad. Why blaze these jewels round my wretched
 head ?

" Why all this labour'd elegance of dress ?

" Why flow these wanton curls in artful rings ?"

Take, snatch 'em hence. Alas ! you all conspire

To heap new sorrows on my tortur'd soul :

All, all conspire to make your queen unhappy.

Lady. This you requir'd, and to the pleasing task

Call'd your officious maids, and urg'd their art :

You bid 'em lead you from yon hideous darkness

To the glad chearing day, yet now avoid it,

And hate the light you sought.

Phad. O my Lycon !

Oh ! how I long to lay my weary head

On tender flow'ry beds and springing grass,

To stretch my limbs beneath the spreading shades

Of venerable oaks, to slake my thirst

With the cool nectar of refreshing springs.

B

Lyc. I'll soothe her phrenzy. Come, Phædra, let's
away;

Let's to the woods and lawns, and limpid streams.

Phæd. Come, let's away; and thou most bright
Diana,

Goddess of woods, immortal, chaste Diana,

" Goddess presiding o'er the rapid race,"

Place me, O place me in the dusty ring,

Where youthful charioteers contend for glory;

See how they mount and shake the flowing reins,

See from the goal the fiery coursers bound,

Now they strain panting up the steepy hill,

Now sweep along its top, now neigh along the vale;

How the car rattles, how its kindling wheels

Smoak in the whirl! the circling sand ascends,

And in the noble dust the chariot's lost.

Lyc. What, madam!

Phæd. Ah, my Lycon! ah, what said I?

Where was I hurry'd by my roving fancy?

My languid eyes are wet with sudden tears,

And on my cheeks unbidden blushes glow.

Lyc. Then blush, but blush for your destructive
silence,

That tears your soul, and weighs you down to death.

Oh! should you die (ye pow'rs forbid her death)

Who then would shield from wrongs your helpless
orphan?

He then might wander, Phædra's son might wander,

A naked suppliant through the world for aid;

" Then he may cry, invoke his mother's name:

" He may be doom'd to chains, to shame, to death,"

While proud Hippolitus "shall mount his throne."

Phæd. O Heav'ns!

Lyc. Ha! Phædra, are you touch'd at this?

Phæd. Unhappy wretch! what name was that you spoke?

Lyc. And does his name provoke your just resentments?

Then let it raise your fear, as well as wrath:
Think how you wrong'd him, to his father wrong'd him;
Think how you drove him hence a wand'ring exile
To distant climes; then think what certain vengeance
His rage may wreak on your unhappy orphan.
For his sake then renew your drooping spirits;
Feed with new oil the wasting lamp of life,
That winks and trembles, now, just now expiring:
Make haste, preserve your life.

Phæd. Alas! too long,
Too long have I preserv'd that guilty life.

Lyc. Guilty! what guilt? has blood, has horrid murder

Imbru'd your hands?

Phæd. Alas! my hands are guiltless,
But oh! my heart's defil'd.
I've said too much; forbear the rest, my Lycon,
And let me die to save the black confession.

Lyc. Die then, but not alone; old faithful Lycon
Shall be a victim to your cruel silence.

Will you not tell? O lovely, wretched queen!

"By all the cares of your first infant years,"
By all the love, and faith, and zeal I've shew'd you,

Tell me your griefs, unfold your hidden sorrows,
And teach your Lycon how to bring you comfort.

Phæd. What shall I say, malicious cruel pow'rs?

"O where shall I begin? O cruel Venus!

"How fatal love has been to all our race!"

Lyc. Forget it, madam; let it die in silence."

Phæd. O Ariadne! O unhappy sister!

Lyc. Cease to record your sister's grief and shame.

Phæd. And since the cruel god of Love requires it,
I fall the last, and most undone of all.

Lyc. Do you then love?

Phæd. Alas! I groan beneath

The pain, the guilt, the shame of impious love.

Lyc. Forbid it, Heav'n!

Phæd. Do not upbraid me, Lycon:

I love.—Alas! I shudder at the name;

My blood runs backward, and my fault'ring tongue

Sticks at the sound—I love.—O righteous Heav'n!

Why was I born with such a sense of virtue,

So great abhorrence of the smallest crime,

And yet a slave to such impetuous guilt?

Rain on me, gods, your plagues, your sharpest tortures,

Afflict my soul with any thing but guilt,

And yet that guilt is mine.—I'll think no more;

I'll to the woods among the happier brutes.

Come, let's away; hark, the shrill horn resounds,

The jolly huntsmens cries rend the wide heav'ns.

Come, o'er the hills pursue the bounding stag;

Come, chase the lion and the foamy boar;

Come, rouse up all the monsters of the wood,

For there, ev'n there, Hippolitus will guard me.

Lyc. Hippolitus!

Phad. Who's he that names Hippolitus?

Ah! I'm betray'd, and all my guilt discover'd.

" Oh! give me poison, swords, I'll not live, nor bear it;

" I'll stop my breath.

" *Ism.* I'm lost, but what's that loss?

" Hippolitus is lost, or lost to me:

" Yet should her charms prevail upon his soul,

" Should he be false, I would not wish him ill;

" With my last parting breath I'd bless my lord:

" Then in some lonely desert place expire,

" Whence my unhapy death shall never reach him,

" Lest it should wound his peace, or damp his joys."

[*Aside.*

Lyc. Think still the secret in your royal breast;

For by the awful majesty of Jove,

By the All-seeing Sun, by righteous Minos,

By all your kindred gods we swear, O Phædra,

Safe as our lives we'll keep the fatal secret.

" *Ism. &c.* We swear, all swear to keep it ever secret."

Phad. Keep it! from whom? why it's already known,

The tale, the whisper of the babbling vulgar:

Oh! can you keep it from yourselves, unknow it?

Or do you think I'm so far gone in guilt,

That I can see, can bear the looks, the eyes

Of one who knows my black detested crimes,

Of one who knows that Phædra loves her son?

Lyc. Unhappy queen! august, unhappy race!

Oh! why did Theseus touch this fatal shore?

Why did he save us from Nicander's arms,

To bring worse ruin on us by his love?

Phad. His love indeed; for that unhappy hour
In which the priests join'd Theseus' hand to mine,
Shew'd the young Scythian to my dazzled eyes.
Gods! how I shook! what boiling heat inflam'd
My panting breast! how from the touch of Theseus
My slack hand dropt, and all the idle pomp,
Priests, altars, victims, swam before my sight!
The god of Love, ev'n the whole god, possess me.

Lyc. At once, at first possess you!

Phad. Yes, at first.

That fatal ev'ning we pursu'd the chace,
When from behind the wood, with rustling sound,
A monstrous boar rush'd forth: "his baleful eyes
" Shot glaring fire, and his stiff-pointed bristles
" Rose high upon his back:" at me he made,
Whetting his tusks, and churning hideous foam;
Then, then Hippolitus flew in to aid me:
Collecting all himself, and rising to the blow,
He-launch'd the whistling spear; the well-aim'd jav'lin
Pierc'd his tough hide, and quiver'd in his heart;
The monster fell, "and gnashing with huge tusks,
" Plow'd up the crimson earth." But then Hippolitus?
Gods! how he mov'd and look'd when he approach'd
me!

"When hot and panting from the savage conquest,
" Dreadful as Mars, and as his Venus lovely,
" His crimson cheeks with purple beauties glow'd,
" His lovely sparkling eyes shot martial fires."

O godlike form! O ecstasy and transport!
 My breath grew short, my beating heart sprung upward,
 And leap'd and bounded in my heaving bosom.
 Alas! I'm pleas'd; the horrid story charms me.—
 No more—That night with fear and love I sicken'd.
 Oft I receiv'd his fatal charming visits;
 Then would he talk with such an heav'nly grace,
 Look with such dear compassion on my pains,
 That I could wish to be so sick for ever.
 My ears, my greedy eyes, my thirsty soul,
 Drank gorging in the dear delicious poison,
 'Till I was lost, quite lost in impious love.

"And shall I drag an execrable life?

"And shall I hoard up guilt, and treasure vengeance?

"*Lyc.* No; labour, strive, subdue that guilt, and live.

"*Phad.* Did I not labour, strive, All-seeing Pow'rs!

"Did I not weep and pray, implore your aid?

"Burn clouds of incense on your loaded altars?

"Oh! I call'd heav'n and earth to my assistance,

"All the ambitious thirst of fame and empire,

"And all the honest pride of conscious virtue:

"I struggled, rav'd; the new-born passion reign'd

"Almighty in its birth."

Lyc. Did you e'er try

To gain his love?

Phad. Avert such crimes, ye pow'rs!

"No; to avoid his love I sought his hatred:

"I wrong'd him, shun'd him, banish'd him from
 Crete;

"I sent him, drove him from my longing sight:

" In vain I drove him, for his tyrant form
 " Reign'd in my heart, and dwelt before my eyes.
 " If to the gods I pray'd, the very vows
 " I made to heav'n, were by my erring tongue
 " Spoke to Hippolitus. If I try'd to sleep,
 " Straight to my drowsy eyes my restless fancy
 " Brought back his fatal form, and curst my slumber.
 " *Lyc.* First let me try to melt him into love."

Phad. No; did his hapless passion equal mine,
 I would refuse the bliss I most desir'd,
 Consult my fame; and sacrifice my life.
 Yes, I would die, heaven knows, this very moment,
 Rather than wrong my lord, my husband Theseus.

Lyc. Perhaps that lord, that husband is no more;
 He went from Crete in haste, his army thin,
 To meet the numerous troops of fierce Molossians;
 Yet though he lives, while ebbing life decays,
 Think on your son.

Phad. Alas! that shocks me.
 O let me see my young one, let me snatch
 A hasty farewell, a last dying kiss.
 Yet stay; his sight will melt my just resolves:
 But oh! I beg with my last sallying breath,—
 Cherish my babe.

A Messenger enters.

Mess. Madam, I grieve to tell you
 What you must know: your royal husband's dead.

Phad. Dead! O ye pow'rs!

Lyc. O fortunate event!

Then earth-born Lycon may ascend the throne,
Leave to his happy son the crown of Jove,
And be ador'd like him. *Be hush'd my joys.* [*Aside.*

"Mourn, mourn, ye Cretans;

"Since he is dead whose valour sav'd your isle,

"Whose prudent care with flowing plenty crown'd

"His peaceful subjects; as your tow'ring Ida,

"With spreading oaks, and with descending streams,

"Shades and enriches all the plains below."

Say how he dy'd.

Mess. He dy'd as Theseus ought;

In battle dy'd: Philotas, now a prisoner,

That rushing on fought next his royal person,

That saw his thund'ring arm beat squadrons down,

Saw the great rival of Alcides fall.

These eyes beheld his well-known steed, beheld

A proud barbarian glitt'ring in his arms,

Encumber'd with the spoil. [*Exit.*

Phæd. Is he then dead?

Is my much-injur'd lord, my Theseus, dead?

And don't I shed one tear upon his urn?

What! not a sigh, a groan, a soft complaint?

Ah! these are tributes due from pious brides,

From a chaste matron, and a virtuous wife:

But savage Love, the tyrant of my heart,

Claims all my sorrows, and usurps my grief.

Lyc. Dismiss that grief, and give a loose to joy:

He's dead, the bar of all your bliss is dead;

Live then, my queen, forget the wrinkled Theseus,

And take the youthful hero to your arms.

" *Phæd.* I dare not now admit of such a thought,
 " And bless'd be heav'n that steel'd my stubborn
 heart;

" That made me shun the bridal bed of Theseus,
 " And give him empire, but refuse him love.

" *Lyc.* Then may his happier son be blest with both;
 " Then rouze your soul, and muster all your charms,
 " Sooth his ambitious mind with thirst of empire,
 " And all his tender thoughts with soft allurements."

Phæd. But should the youth refuse my proffer'd love!
 O should he throw me from his loathing arms!

I fear the trial; for I know Hippolitus
 Fierce in the right, and obstinately good:

" When round beset, his virtue like a flood,
 " Breaks with resistless force th' opposing dams,
 " And bears the mounds along; they're hurry'd on,
 " And swell the torrent they were rais'd to stop."

I dare not yet resolve; I'll try to live,
 And to the awful gods I'll leave the rest.

Lyc. Madam, your signet, that your slave may order
 What's most expedient for your royal service.

Phæd. Take it, and with it take the fate of Phædra.
 And thou, O Venus! aid a suppliant queen,
 That owns thy triumphs, and adores thy pow'r:
 " O spare thy captives, and subdue thy foes.
 " On this cold Scythian let thy pow'r be known,
 " And in a lover's cause assert thy own:
 " Then Crete as Paphos shall adore thy shrine;
 " This nurse of Jove with grateful fires shall shine,
 " And with thy father's flames shall worship thine.

[*Exit Phæd. &c.*

LYCON *solus.*

If she proposes love, why then as surely
His haughty soul refuses it with scorn.—
Say I confine him!—If she dies he's safe;
And if she lives, I'll work her raging mind.
A woman scorn'd, with ease I'll work to vengeance;
With humble, wise, obsequious fawning arts,
I'll rule the whirl and transport of her soul;
That when her reason hates, her rage may act.

When barks glide slowly through the lazy main,
The baffled pilots turn the helms in vain;
When driv'n by winds they cut the foamy way,
The rudders govern, and the ships obey. [*Exit.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

PHÆDRA, LYCON, and Messenger *enter.*

Messenger.

MADAM, the prince Hippolitus attends.

Phæd. Admit him. Where, where, Phædra's now
thy soul!

What—shall I speak? And shall my guilty tongue
Let this insulting victor know his pow'r?
Or shall I still confine within my breast
My restless passions and devouring flames?

But see he comes, the lovely tyrant comes.—
He rushes on me like a blaze of light;
I cannot bear the transport of his presence,
But sink oppress'd with woe.

[Swoons.]

HIPPOLITUS enters.

Hip. Immortal gods!

What have I done to raise such strange abhorrence?
What have I done to shake her shrinking nature
With my approach, and kill her with my sight?

Lyc. Alas! another grief devours her soul,
And only your assistance can relieve her.

Hip. Ha! make it known, that I may fly and aid her.

Lyc. But promise first, my lord, to keep it secret.

Hip. Promise! I swear, on this good sword I swear,
This sword, which first gain'd youthful Theseus
honour!

Which oft has punish'd perjury and falshood;
By thund'ring Jove, by Grecian Hercules,
“By the ma'estic form of godlike heroes,
“That shine around, and consecrate the steel;”
No racks, no shame shall ever force it from me.

Phæd. Hippolitus.

Hip. Yes, 'tis that wretch, who begs you to dismiss
That hated object from your eyes for ever.
Begs leave to march against the foes of Theseus,
And to revenge or share his father's fate.

Phæd. O Hippolitus!

I own I've wrong'd you, most unjustly wrong'd you;

Drove you from court, from Crete, and from your father:

The court, all Crete, deplor'd their suffering hero

And I (the sad occasion) most of all.

Yet could you know relenting Phædra's soul!

Oh, could you think with what reluctant grief

I wrong'd the hero whom I wish'd to cherish!

Oh! you'd confess me wretched, not unkind,

And own those ills did most deserve your pity,

Which most procur'd your hate.

Hip. My hate to Phædra!

Ha! could I hate the royal spouse of Theseus,

My queen, my mother?

Phad. Why your queen and mother?

More humble ties would suit my lost condition.

Alas! the iron hand of death is on me,

And I have only time t' implore your pardon.

Ah! would my lord forget injurious Phædra,

And with compassion view her helpless orphan!

Would he receive him to his dear protection,

Defend his youth from all encroaching foes!

Hip. Oh, I'll defend him! with my life defend him!

Heaven, dart your judgment on this faithless head,

If I don't pay him all a slave's obedience,

And all a father's love.

Phad. A father's love!

Oh, doubtful sounds! oh, vain deceitful hopes!

My grief's much eas'd by this transcending goodness,

And Theseus' death sits lighter on my soul.

Death! he's not dead: he lives, he breathes, he speaks;
 He lives in you, he's present to my eyes;
 I see him, speak to him.—My heart! I rave,
 And all my folly's known.

Hip. Oh, glorious folly!

See, Theseus, see, how much your Phædra lov'd you.

Phad. Love him, indeed! dote, languish, die for him.
 Forsake my food, my sleep, all joys for Theseus;
 “(But not that hoary venerable Theseus)”
 But Theseus, as he was when mantling blood
 Glow'd in his lovely cheeks; “when his bright eyes
 “Sparkled with youthful fires;” when ev'ry grace
 Shone in the father, which now crowns the son;
 When Theseus was Hippolitus.

Hip. Ha! amazement strikes me:
 Where will this end?

Lyc. Is't difficult to guess?
 Does not her flying paleness, “that but now
 “Sat cold and languid in her fading cheek,
 “(Where now succeeds a momentary lustre)
 “Does not her beating heart,” her trembling limbs,
 Her wishing looks, her speech, her present silence,
 All, all proclaim imperial Phædra loves you?

Hip. What do I hear? what, does no lightning flash,
 No thunder bellow, when such monstrous crimes
 Are own'd, avow'd, confest? All-seeing Sun!
 Hide, hide in shameful night thy beamy head,
 And cease to view the horrors of thy race.
 Alas! I share th' amazing guilt; these eyes,
 That first inspir'd the black incestuous flame,

These ears, that heard the tale of impious love,
Are all accurs'd, and all deserve your thunder.

Phæd. Alas, my lord! believe me not so vile.
No; "by thy goddess, by the chaste Diana,
"None but my first, my much-lov'd lord Arsammes,
"Was e'er receiv'd in these unhappy arms."

No; for the love of thee, of those dear charms,
Which now I see are doom'd to be my ruin,
I still deny'd my lord, my husband Theseus,
The chaste, the modest joys of spotless marriage;
That drove him hence to war, to stormy seas,
To rocks and waves, less cruel than his Phædra.

Hip. If that drove Theseus hence, then that kill'd
Theseus,
And cruel Phædra kill'd her husband Theseus.

Phæd. Forbear, rash youth, nor dare to rouse my
vengeance;

Provoke me not; nor tempt my swelling rage
With black reproaches, scorn, and provocation,
To do a deed my reason would abhor.

Long has the secret struggled in my breast,
Long has it rack'd and rent my tortur'd bosom;
But now 'tis out. Shame, rage, confusion tear
And drive me on to act unheard-of crimes;
To murder thee, myself, and all that know it.

As when convulsions cleave the lab'ring earth,
Before the dismal yawn appears, the ground
Trembles and heaves, the nodding houses crash;
He's safe, who from the dreadful warning flies
But he that sees its opening bosom dies.

[Exit.

Hip. Then let me take the warning and retire ;
I'd rather trust the rough Ionian waves,
Than woman's fiercer rage.

" [*Ismena shews herself, listening.*]"

Lyc. Alas, my lord !
You must not leave the queen to her despair.

Hip. Must not ! from thee ? from that vile upstart
Lycon ?

Lyc. Yes ; from that Lycon who derives his greatness
From Phædra's race, and now would guard her life.
Then, sir, forbear, view here this royal signet,
And in her faithful slave obey the queen.

CRATANDER and Guards enter.

Guards, watch the prince, but at that awful distance,
With that respect it may not seem confinement,
But only meant for honour.

Hip. So, confinement is
The honour Crete bestows on Theseus' son ;
Am I confin'd ? and is't so soon forgot,
When fierce Procrustes' arms o'er-ran your kingdom ?
When your streets echo'd with the cries of orphans,
Your shrieking maids clung round the hallow'd shrines,
When all your palaces and lofty towers
Smoak'd on the earth, when the red sky around
Glow'd with your city's flames (a dreadful lustre) :
Then, then my father flew to your assistance ;
Then Theseus sav'd your lives, estates, and honours,
And do you thus reward the hero's toil ?
And do you now confine the hero's son ?

Lyc. Take not an easy short confinement ill,
Which your own safety and the queen's requires;
Nor harbour fear of one that joys to serve you.

Hip. Oh, I disdain thee, traitor, but not fear thee;
Nor will I hear of services from Lycon.
Thy very looks are lies: eternal falshood
Smiles in thy looks, and flatters in thy eyes;
Ev'n in thy humble face I read my ruin,
In ev'ry cringing bow and fawning smile.
Why else d'ye whisper out your dark suspicions?
Why with malignant eulogies encrease
The people's fears, and praise me to my ruin?
Why thro' the troubled streets of frightened Gnosus
Do bucklers, helms, and polish'd armour blaze?
Why sounds the dreadful din of instant war,
Whilst still the foe's unknown?

Lyc. Then quit thy arts;
Put off the statesman, and resume the judge. [*Aside.*
Thou, Proteus, shift thy various forms no more,
But boldly own the god,——That foe's too near.

[*To Hip.*

The queen's disease, and your aspiring mind,
Disturb all Crete, and give a loose to war.

Hip. Gods! dares he speak thus to a monarch's son,
And must this earth-born slave command in Crete?
Was it for this my godlike father fought?
Did Theseus bleed for Lycon? O ye Cretans,
See there your king, the successor of Minos,
And heir of Jove.

Lyc. You may as well provoke

That Jove you worship, as this slave you scorn.
Go seize Almazon, Nicias, and all
The black abettors of this impious treason.

[*Exit a Soldier.*]

Now o'er thy head th' avenging thunder rolls ;
For know, on me depends thy instant doom.
Then learn, proud Prince, to bend thy haughty soul,
And, if thou think'st of life, obey the queen.

Hip. Then free from fear or guilt I'll wait my doom.
Whate'er's my fault, no stain shall blot my glory.
I'll guard my honour ; you dispose my life.

" *Lyc.* Be it so, Cratander follow me."

[*Exit Lyc. and Crat.*]

Hip. Since he dares brave my rage, the danger's near.
The timorous hounds that hunt the generous lion
Bay afar off, and tremble in pursuit ;
But when he struggles in th' entangling toils,
Insult the dying prey.—

ISMENA and Lady enter.

" 'Tis kindly done, Ismena,
" With all your charms to visit my distress ;
" Soften my chains, and make confinement easy."
O Ismena, is it then giv'n me to behold thy beauties !
" Those blushing sweets, those lovely loving eyes !"
To press, to strain thee to my beating heart,
And grow thus to my love ! What's liberty to this ?
What's fame or greatness ? take 'em, take 'em, Phædra,
" Freedom and fame," and in the dear confinement
Enclose me thus for ever,

Ism. O Hippolitus!

Oh, I could ever dwell in this confinement!

Nor wish for aught while I behold my lord:

But yet that wish, that only wish is vain,

When my hard fate thus forces me to beg you'd

Drive from your godlike soul a wretched maid:

Take to your arms (assist me, Heav'n! to speak it)

Take to your arms imperial Phædra,

And think of me no more.

Hip. Not think of thee?

What! part, for ever part? unkind Ismena!

Oh! can you think that death is half so dreadful,

As it would be to live, and live without thee?

Say, should I quit thee, should I turn to Phædra

Say, couldst thou bear it? could thy tender soul

Endure the torment of despairing love,

And see me settled in a rival's arms?

Ism. Think not of me: Perhaps my equal mind

May learn to bear the fate the gods allot me.

Yet would you hear me; "could your lov'd Ismena

"With all her charms o'er-rule your sullen honour,"

You yet might live, nor leave the poor Ismena.

Hip. Speak: if I can, I'm ready to obey,

Ism. Give the queen hopes.

Hip. No more—my soul disdains it.

No; should I try, my haughty soul would swell,

Sharpen each word, and threaten in my eyes.

Oh, should I stoop to cringe, to lie, forswear?

Deserve the ruin which I strive to shun?

Ism. Oh, I can't bear this cold contempt of death!

This rigid virtue, that prefers your glory
To liberty or life. O cruel man!

"By these sad sighs, by these poor streaming eyes,

"By that dear love that makes us now unhappy,

"By the near danger of that precious life,

"Heav'n knows I value much above my own.

"What! not yet mov'd?" are you resolv'd on death?

Then, ere 'tis night, I swear by all the pow'rs,

This steel shall end my fears and life together.

"*Hip.* You sha'n't be trusted with a life so precious."

"No; to the court I'll publish your design:

"Ev'n bloody Lycon will prevent your fate;

"Lycon shall wrench the dagger from your bosom;

"And raving Phædra will preserve Ismena.

"*Ism.* Phædra! come on, I'll lead you on to Phædra:

"I'll tell her all the secrets of our love;

"Give to her rage her close destructive rival:

"Her rival sure will fall; her love may save you.

"Come, see me labour in the pangs of death,

"My agonizing limbs, my dying eyes,

"Dying, yet fix'd in death on my Hippolitus."

Hip. "What's your design?" ye pow'rs! what
means my love?

Ism. She means to lead you in the road of fate;

She means to die with one she can't preserve.

Yet when you see me pale upon the earth,

This once-lov'd form grown horrible in death,

Sure your relenting soul would wish you'd save me.

Hip. Oh! I'll do all, do any thing to save you;

Give up my fame, and all my darling honour:

"I'll run, I'll fly; what you'll command I'll say."

I yield, Ismena. What would you have me do?

Ism. Say what occasion, chance, or Heav'n inspires;

Say that you love her, that you lov'd her long;

Say that you'll wed her, say that you'll comply;

Say, to preserve your life, say any thing.

Bless him, ye pow'rs! and if it be a crime, [*Exit Hip.*

Oh! if the pious fraud offend your justice,

Aim all your vengeance on Ismena's head;

Punish Ismena, but forgive Hippolitus.

"He's gone, and now my brave resolves are stagger'd,

"Now I repent, like some despairing wretch

"That boldly plunges in the frightful deep,

"That pants, and struggles with the whirling waves,

"And catches ev'ry slender reed to save him."

Lady. But should he do what your commands enjoin'd him,

Say, should he wed her?

Ism. Should he wed the queen?

Oh! I'd remember that 'twas my request,

And die well pleas'd I made the hero happy.

Lady. Die! does Ismena then resolve to die?

Ism. Can I then live? can I, who lov'd so well,

To part with all my bliss to save my lover?

Oh! can I drag a wretched life without him,

And see another revel in his arms?

Oh, 'tis in death alone I can have comfort!

LYCON enters.

Lyc. What a reverse is this! perfidious boy,

Is this thy truth? is this thy boasted honour?

Then all are rogues alike : I never thought
But one man honest, and that one deceives me. [*Aside.*
Ismena here!——

Ism. Now, my lord, is the queen's rage abated?
How is the prince dispos'd?

Lyc. Happily,
All's chang'd to love and harmony, my fair.

" 'Tis all agreed, and now the prince is safe
" From the sure vengeance of despairing love ;"
Now Phædra's rage is chang'd to soft endearments :
She doats, she dies ; and few, but tedious days,
With endless joys will crown the happy pair.

Ism. Does he then wed the queen ?

Lyc. At least I think so.

I, when the prince approach'd, not far retir'd,
Pale with my doubts : he spoke ; th' attentive queen
Dwelt on his accents, and her gloomy eyes
Sparkled with gentler fires ; he blushing, bow'd,
She, trembling, lost in love, with soft confusion
Receiv'd his passion, and return'd her own.
Then smiling turn'd to me, and bad me order
The pompous rites of her ensuing nuptials,
Which I must now pursue. Farewell, Ismena. [*Exit.*

Ism. Then I'll retire, and not disturb their joys.

Lady. Stay and learn more.

Ism. Ah ! wherefore should I stay ?

What ! shall I stay to rave, t' upbraid, to hold him ?
To snatch the struggling charmer from her arms ?
For could you think that open gen'rous youth
Could with feign'd love deceive a jealous woman ?

“ Could he so soon grow artful in dissembling ?
 “ Ah ! without doubt his thoughts inspir’d his tongue,
 “ And all his soul receiv’d a real love.
 “ Perhaps new graces darted from her eyes,
 “ Perhaps soft pity charm’d his yielding soul,
 “ Perhaps her love, perhaps her kingdom charm’d him ;
 “ Perhaps—alas ! how many things might charm him !
 “ *Lady*. Wait the success : it is not yet decided.
 “ *Ism*. Not yet decided ! did not Lycon tell us
 “ How he protested, sigh’d, and look’d, and vow’d ?
 “ How the soft passion languish’d in his eyes ? ”
 Ay, no, he loves, he doats on Phædra’s charms.
 Now, now he clasps her to his panting breast,
 “ Now he devours her with his eager eyes,”
 Now grasps her hands, and now he looks, and vows
 The dear false things that charm’d the poor Ismena.
 He comes ; be still, my heart ; the tyrant comes,
 Charming, though false, and lovely in his guilt.

HIPPOLITUS *enters*.

Hip. Why hangs that cloudy sorrow on your brow ?
 Why do you sigh ? why flow your swelling eyes ?
 Those eyes that us’d with joy to view Hippolitus.
Ism. My lord, my soul is charm’d with your success.
 You know, my lord, my fears are but for you,
 For your dear life ; and since my death alone
 Can make you safe, that soon shall make you happy.
 “ Yet had you brought less love to Phædra’s arms,
 “ My soul had parted with a less regret ;
 “ Blest if surviving in your dear remembrance.”

Hip. Your death! "my love! my marriage! and to Phædra!"

Hear me, Ismena.

Ism. No, I dare not hear you.

But though you've been thus cruelly unkind,
Though you have left me for the royal Phædra,
Yet still my soul o'er-runs with fondness tow'rd's you;
Yet still I die with joy to save Hippolitus.

Hip. Die to save me! could I outlive Ismena?

Ism. Yes, you'd outlive her in your Phædra's arms,
And may you there find ev'ry blooming pleasure!
Oh, may the gods show'r blessings on thy head!
"May the gods crown thy glorious arms with conquest,
"And all thy peaceful days with sure repose!"
May'st thou be blest with lovely Phædra's charms,
And for thy ease forget the lost Ismena!
"Farewell, Hippolitus."

Hip. Ismena, stay,

Stay, hear me speak; or by th' infernal powers
I'll not survive the minute you depart.

Ism. What would you say? ah! don't deceive my weakness.

Hip. Deceive thee! why, Ismena, do you wrong me?
Why doubt my faith? O lovely, cruel maid!
Why wound my tender soul with harsh suspicion?
Oh, by those charming eyes, by thy dear love,
I neither thought nor spoke, design'd nor promis'd,
To love, or wed the queen.

Ism. Speak on, my lord,
My honest soul inclines me to believe thee;

And much I fear, and much I hope I've wrong'd thee.

Hip. Then thus. I came and spake, but scarce of love;

The easy queen receiv'd my faint address

With eager hope and unsuspecting faith.

Lycon with seeming joy dismiss'd my guards :

My gen'rous soul disdain'd the mean deceit,

But still deceiv'd her to obey Ismena.

Ism. Art thou then true? thou art. Oh, pardon me?

Pardon the errors of a silly maid,

Wild with her fears, and mad with jealousy ;

For still that fear, that jealousy was love.

Haste then, my lord, and save yourself by flight ;

" And when your absent, when your godlike form

" Shall cease to cheer forlorn Ismena's eyes,

" Then let each day, each hour, each minute, bring

" Some kind remembrance of your constant love ;

" Speak of your health, your fortune, and your friends,

" (For sure those friends shall have my tenderest wishes)

" Speak much of all ; but of thy dear, dear love,

" Speak much, speak very much, but still speak on."

Hip. Oh! thy dear love shall ever be my theme ;

Of that alone I'll talk the live-long day ;

But thus I'll talk, thus dwelling in thy eyes,

Tasting the odours of thy fragrant bosom.

Come then, to crown me with immortal joys,

Come, be the kind companion of my flight,

Come, haste with me to leave this fatal shore.

The bark before prepar'd for my departure

Expects its freight : an hundred lusty rowers
Have wav'd their sinewy arms, and call Hippolitus ;
The loosen'd canvass trembles with the wind,
And the sea whitens with auspicious gales.

“ *Ism.* Fly then, my lord, and may the gods protect thee !

“ Fly, ere insidious Lycon work thy ruin ;

“ Fly, ere my fondness talk thy life away ;

“ Fly from the queen.

“ *Hip.* But not from my Ismena.

“ Why do you force me from your heav'nly sight,

“ With those dear arms that ought to clasp me to thee

“ *Ism.* Oh, I could rave for ever at my fate !

“ And with alternate love and fear possess'd,

“ Now force thee from my arms, now snatch thee to
my breast,

“ And tremble till you go, but die till you return.

“ Nay, I could go. Ye gods, if I should go,

“ What would Fame say ? if I should fly alone

“ With a young lovely prince that charm'd my soul ?

“ *Hip.* Say you did well to fly a certain ruin,

“ To fly the fury of a queen incens'd,

“ To crown with endless joys the youth that lov'd you

“ Oh ! by the joys our mutual loves have brought,

“ By the blest hours I've languish'd at your feet,

“ By all the love you ever bore Hippolitus,

“ Come fly from hence, and make him ever happy.

“ *Ism.* Hide me, ye pow'rs ! I never shall resist.

“ *Hip.* Will you refuse me ? can I leave behind me

“ All that inspires my soul, and cheers my eyes ?

"Will you not go? then here I'll wait my doom.

"Come, raving Phædra; bloody Lycon come!

"I offer to your rage this worthless life,

"Since 'tis no longer my Ismena's care."

Ism. Oh! haste away, my lord; I go, I fly,
Through all the dangers of the boist'rous deep:
When the wind whistles through the crackling masts,
When through the yawning ship the foaming sea
Rowls bubbling in; then, then I'll clasp thee fast,
And in transporting love forget my fear.

Oh! I will wander through the Scythian gloom,
O'er ice, and hills of everlasting snow;
There, when the horrid darkness shall inclose us,
When the bleak wind shall chill my shiv'ring limbs,
Thou shalt alone supply the distant sun,
And cheer my gazing eyes, and warm my heart.

Hip. Come, let's away, and, like another Jason,
I'll bear my beauteous conquest through the seas:
A greater treasure, and a nobler prize
Than he from Colchis bore. Sleep, sleep in peace,
Ye monsters of the woods, on Ida's top
Securely roam; no more my early horn
Shall wake the lazy day. Transporting love
Reigns in my heart, and makes me all its own.
So, when bright Venus yielded up her charms,
The blest Adonis languish'd in her arms;
His idle horn on fragrant myrtles hung,
His arrows scatter'd, and his bow unstrung:
Obscure in coverts lie his dreaming hounds,

And bay the fancy'd boar with feeble sounds ;
 For nobler sports he quits the savage fields,
 And all the hero to the lover yields.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

LYCON and Guards enter.

Lycon.

HEAV'N is at last appeas'd : the pitying gods
 Have hear'd our wishes, and auspicious Jove
 Smiles on his native isle ; for Phædra lives,
 Restor'd to Crete, and to herself, she lives :
 Joy with fresh strength inspires her drooping limbs,
 " Revives her charms," and o'er her faded cheeks
 Spreads " a fresh" rosy bloom : " as kindly springs
 " With genial heat renew the frozen earth,
 " And paint its smiling face with gaudy flow'rs.
 " But see she comes, the beauteous Phædra comes.

PHÆDRA, and four Ladies, enter.

" How her eyes sparkle ! how their radiant beams
 " Confess their shining ancestor the sun !"
 Your charms to day will wound despairing crowds,
 And give the pains you suffer'd : nay, Hippolitus,
 The fierce, the brave, th' insensible Hippolitus,
 Shall pay a willing homage to your beauty,
 And in his turn adore,——

Phaed. 'Tis flatt'ry all.

Yet when you name the prince, that flatt'ry's pleasing;
You wish it so; poor good old man, you wish it.

The fertile province of Cydonia's thine:

Is there aught else? has happy Phædra aught
In the wide circle of her far-stretch'd empire?

Ask, take, my friend, secure of no repulse.

Let spacious Crete through all her hundred cities

Resound her Phædra's joy. "Let altars smook,

"And richest gums, and spice, and incense roll

"Their fragrant wreaths to Heav'n, to pitying Heav'n,

"Which gives Hippolitus to Phædra's arms.

"Set all at large, and bid the loathsome dungeons

"Give up the meagre slaves that pine in darkness

"And waste in grief, as did despairing Phædra:

"Let them be cheer'd, let the starv'd prisoners riot,

"And glow with gen'rous wine."—Let sorrow cease.

Let none be wretched, none, since Phædra's happy.

"But now he comes, and with an equal passion

"Rewards my flame, and springs into my arms!"

A Messenger enters.

Say, where's the prince?

Mess. He's no where to be found.

Phaed. Perhaps, he hunts.

Mess. He hunted not to-day.

Phaed. Ha! have you search'd the walks, the courts,
the temples?

Mess. Search'd all in vain.

Phaed. Did he not hunt to-day?

Alas! you told me once before he did not: [*Exit Mess.*]
My heart misgives me.

Lyc. "So indeed doth mine." *Then my fears were true.*

Phaed. Could he deceive me? could that godlike youth

Design the ruin of a queen that loves?

Oh! he's all truth; his words, his looks, his eyes,
Open to view his inmost thoughts.—He comes.

Ha! who art thou? whence com'st thou? where's
Hippolitus?

A Messenger enters.

Mess. Madam, Hippolitus with fair Ismena
Drove tow'rd the port.—

Phaed. With fair Ismena!

Curst be her cruel beauty, curst her charms,
Curst all her soothing, fatal, false endearments.

"That heav'nly virgin, that exalted goodness,

"Could see me tortur'd with despairing love,

"With artful tears could mourn my monstrous
suff'rings,

"While her base malice plotted my destruction."

Lyc. A thousand reasons crowd upon my soul,
That evidence their love.

"*Phaed.* Yes, yes, they love;

"Why else should he refuse my profer'd bed?

"Why should one warm'd with youth, and thirst of
glory,

"Disdain a soul, a form, a crown like mine?

"*Lyc.*" Where, Lycon, where was then thy boasted
cunning?

Dull, thoughtless wretch.

Phaed. O pains unfelt before!

The grief, despair, the agonies, and pangs,
All the wild fury of distracted love,
Are nought to this—Say, famous politician,
Where, when, and how did their first passion rise?
Where did they breathe their sighs? what shady groves,
What gloomy woods, conceal'd their hidden loves?
Alas! they hid it not; the well-pleas'd sun
With all his beams survey'd their guiltless flame;
Glad zephyrs wafted their untainted sighs,
And Ida echo'd their endearing accents,
While I, the shame of Nature, hid in darkness,
Far from the balmy air and cheering light,
Prest down my sighs, and dry'd my falling tears,
Search'd a retreat to mourn, and watch'd to grieve.

Lyc. Now cease that grief, and let your injur'd love
Contrive due vengeance; let majestic Phædra,
That lov'd the hero, sacrifice the villain.
Then haste, send forth your ministers of vengeance,
To snatch the traitor from your rival's arms,
And force him trembling to your awful presence.

Phaed. O rightly thought—Dispatch th' attend-
ing guards;
Bid them bring forth their instruments of death:
Darts, engines, flames, and launch into the deep,
And hurl swift vengeance on the perjur'd slave.

[*Exit Messenger.*]

Where am I, Gods ; what is't my rage commands ?
 Ev'n now he's gone ; ev'n now the well-tim'd oars.
 With sounding strokes, divide the sparkling waves,
 And happy gales assist their speedy flight.
 " Now they embrace, and ardent love enflames
 " Their flushing cheeks, and trembles in their eyes ;
 " Now they expose my weakness and my crimes ;
 " Now to the sporting croud they tell my follies."

CRATANDER enters.

Crat. Sir, as I went to seize the persons order'd,
 I met the prince, and with him fair Ismena.
 I seiz'd the prince, who now attends without.

Phaed. Haste, bring him in.

Lyc. Be quick and seize Ismena. [*Exit Cratander.*]

HIPPOLITUS enters, with two Guards.

Phaed. Could'st thou deceive me ? could a son of
 Theseus

Stoop to so mean, so base a vice as fraud ?
 Nay, act such monstrous perfidy, yet start
 From promis'd love ?

Hip. My soul disdain'd a promise.

Phaed. But yet your false equivocating tongue,
 Your looks, your eyes, your ev'ry motion promis'd.
 But you are ripe in frauds, and learn'd in falsehoods.
 " Look down, O Theseus, and behold thy son,
 " As Sciron faithless, as Procrustes cruel.
 " Behold the crimes, the tyrants, all the monsters,

" From which thy valour purg'd the groaning earth,
 " Behold them all in thy own son reviv'd.

" *Hip.* Touch not my glory, lest you stain your own:

" I still have strove to make my glorious father

" Blush, yet rejoice to see himself outdone ;

" To mix my parents in my lineal virtues,

" As Theseus just, and as Camilla chaste.

" *Phaed.* The godlike Theseus never was thy parent,

" No, 'twas some monthly Cappadocian drudge,

" Obedient to the scourge, and beaten to her arms,

" Begot thee, traitor, on the chaste Camilla.

" Camilla chaste ! an amazon and chaste !

" That quits her sex, and yet retains her virtue.

" See the chaste matron mount the neighing steed ;

" In strict embraces lock the struggling warrior,

" And choose the lover in the sturdy foe.

*A Messenger enters, and seems to talk earnestly with
 Lycon.*

" *Hip.* No ; she refus'd the vows of godlike Theseus,

" And chose to stand his arms, not meet his love ;

" And doubtful was the fight. The wide Thermodoon

" Heard the huge strokes resound ; its frighted waves

" Convey'd the rattling din to distant shores,

" While she alone supported all his war ;

" Nor till she sunk beneath his thund'ring arm,

" Beneath which warlike nations bow'd, would yield

" To honest wish'd-for love.

" *Phaed.* Not so her son ;

" Who boldly ventures on forbidden flames,

" On one descended from the cruel Pallas,
 " Foe to thy father's person and his blood ;
 " Hated by him, of kindred yet more hated,
 " The last of all the wicked race he ruin'd.
 " In vain a fierce successive hatred reign'd
 " Between your sires ; in vain, like Cadmus' race,
 " With mingled blood they dy'd the blushing earth.
 " *Hip.* In vain indeed, since now the war is o'er :
 " We, like the Theban race, agree to love,
 " And by our mutual flames and future off-spring,
 " Atone for slaughter past.

" *Phæd.* Your future off-spring !

" Heav'ns ! what a medley's this ? what dark confusion,
 " Of blood and death, of murder and relation !
 " What joy 't had been to old disabled Theseus,
 " When he should take the off-spring in his arms ?
 " Ev'n in his arms to hold an infant Pallas,
 " And be upbraided with his grandsire's fate."
 O barbarous youth !

Lyc. Too barbarous I fear. [Distant Shout.

Perhaps e'en now his faction's up in arms,
 Since waving crowds roll onwards tow'rd's the palace,
 And rend the city with tumultuous clamours !
 Perhaps to murder Phædra and her son,
 And give the crown to him and his Ismena :
 But I'll prevent it. [Exit.

ISMENA brought in by two Gentlemen.

Phæd. What ! the kind Ismena ;
 That nurs'd me, watch'd my sickness ! oh, she watch'd
 me,

As rav'nous vultures watch the dying lion,
To tear his heart, and riot in his blood.

"Hark, hark, my little infant cries for justice!

"Oh! be appeas'd, my babe, thou shalt have justice."

Now all the spirits of my godlike race

Enflame my soul, and urge me on to vengeance.

"Arsamnes, Minos, Jove, th' avenging Sun,

"Inspire my fury, and demand my justice.

"Oh! you shall have it; thou, Minos, shalt applaud it.

"Yes, thou shalt copy it in their pains below."

God of revenge arise.—He comes, he comes;

"And shoots himself thro' all my kindling blood."

I have it here.—Now, base perfidious wretch,

Now-sigh, and weep, and tremble in thy turn.

Yes, your Ismena shall appease my vengeance,

Ismena dies; and thou her pitying lover

Doom'd her to death.—Thou too shalt see her bleed,

See her convulsive pangs, and hear her dying groans:

Go, glut thy eyes with thy ador'd Ismena,

And laugh at dying Phædra.

Hip. O Ismena!

Ism. Alas! my tender soul would shrink at death,

Shake with its fears, and sink beneath its pains,

In any cause but this.—But now I'm steel'd,

And the near danger lessens to my sight.

Now, if I live, 'tis only for Hippolitus,

And with an equal joy I'll die to save him.

"Yes, for his sake I'll go a willing shade,

"And wait his coming in th' Elysian fields;

"And there enquire of each descending ghost

"Of my lov'd hero's welfare, life, and honour :

"That dear remembrance will improve the bliss,

"Add to th' Elysian joys, and make that Heav'n more
happy."

Hip. "O heav'nly virgin! [*Aside.*]" O imperial

Phædra,

Let your rage fall on this devoted head ;

But spare, Oh! spare a guiltless virgin's life;

"Think of her youth, her innocence, her virtue ;

"Think with what warm compassion she bemoan'd you;

"Think how she serv'd and watch'd you in your
sickness ;

"How ev'ry rising and descending sun

"Saw kind Ismena watching o'er the queen."

I only promis'd, I alone deceiv'd you ;

And I, and only I, should feel your justice.

Ism. Oh! by those pow'rs to whom I soon must
answer

For all my faults ; by that bright arch of heav'n

I now last see, I wrought him by my wiles,

By tears, by threats, by ev'ry female art,

Wrought his disdainful soul to false compliance.

The son of Theseus could not think of fraud ;

'Twas woman all.

Phaed. I see 'twas woman all :

And woman's fraud should meet with woman's ven-
geance.

But yet thy courage, truth, and virtue shock me :

A love so warm, so firm, so like my own.

Oh! had the gods so pleas'd, had bounteous heav'n

Bestow'd Hippolitus on Phædra's arms,

So had I stood the shock of angry fate ;
So had I giv'n my life with joy to save him.

Hip. And can you doom her death ? can Minos'
daughter

Condemn the virtue which her soul admires ?
Are not you Phædra ? once the boast of fame,
Shame of our sex, and pattern of your own.

Phæd. Am I that Phædra ? no ; another soul,
Informs my alter'd frame. Could else Ismena
Provoke my hatred, yet deserve my love ?
Aid me, ye gods, support my sinking glory,
Restore my reason, and confirm my virtue.

Yet, is my rage unjust ? then, why was Phædra
Rescu'd for torment, and preserv'd for pain ?
Why did you raise me to the height of joy,
Above the wreck of clouds and storms below,
To dash and break me on the ground for ever ?

Ism. Was it not time to urge him to compliance,
At least to feign it, when perfidious Lycon
Confin'd his person, and conspir'd his death ?

Phæd. Confin'd and doom'd to death !——O cruel
Lycon !

Could I have doom'd thy death ? could these sad eyes,
That lov'd thee living, e'er behold thee dead ?
Yet thou could'st see me die without concern,
Rather than save a wretched queen from ruin.

“ Else could you choose to trust the warring winds,
“ The swelling waves, the rocks, the faithless sands,
“ And all the raging monsters of the deep ? ”

Oh ! think you see me on the naked shore ;

Think how I scream and tear my scatter'd hair;
 Break from th' embraces of my shrieking maids,
 And harrow on the sand my bleeding bosom;
 Then catch with wide-stretch'd arms the empty billows,
 And headlong plunge into the gaping deep.

Hip. O dismal state! my bleeding heart relents,
 And all my thoughts dissolve in tend'rest pity.

Phæd. If you can pity, oh! refuse not love;
 But stoop to rule in Crete, the seat of heroes,
 And nursery of gods. A hundred cities
 Court thee for lord, "where the rich busy crowds
 "Struggle for passage through the spacious streets;
 "Where thousand ships o'ershade the less'ning main,
 "And tire the lab'ring wind. The suppliant nations
 "Bow to its ensigns, and with lower'd sails
 "Confess the ocean's queen. For thee alone
 "The winds shall blow, and the vast ocean roll.
 "For thee alone the fam'd Cydonian warriors
 "From twanging yews shall send their fatal shafts.

"*Hip.* Then let me march their leader, not their
 prince;

"And at the head of your renown'd Cydonians
 "Brandish this far-fam'd sword of conqu'ring Theseus;
 "That I may shake th' Egyptian tyrant's yoke
 "From Asia's neck, and fix it on his own;
 "That willing nations may obey your laws,
 "And your bright ancestor, the sun, may shine
 "On nought but Phædra's empire.

"*Phæd.* Why not thine?

"Dost thou so far detest my proffer'd bed,

" As to refuse my crown?—O cruel youth!
 " By all the pain that wrings my tortur'd soul,
 " By all the dear deceitful hopes you gave me,
 " O ease, at least once more delude, my sorrows,
 " For your dear sake I've lost my darling honour;
 " For you but now I gave my soul to death;
 " For you I'd quit my crown, and stoop beneath
 " The happy bondage of an humble wife;
 " With thee I'd climb the steepy Ida's summit,
 " And in the scorching heat and chilling dews,
 " O'er hills, o'er vales, pursue the shaggy lion.
 " Careless of danger, and of wasting toil,
 " Of pinching hunger, and impatient thirst,
 " I'll find all joys in thee.

" *Hip.* Why stoops the queen

" To ask, intreat, to supplicate, and pray
 " To prostitute her crown and sex's honour,
 " To one whose humble thoughts can only rise
 " To be your slave, not lord?

" *Phæd.* And is that all?"

See if he deign to force an artful groan,
 Or call a tear from his unwilling eyes?
 " Hard as his native rocks, cold as his sword,
 " Fierce as the wolves that howl'd around his birth!
 " He hates the tyrant, and the suppliant scorns.
 " O Heav'n! O Minos! O imperial Jove!
 " Do ye not blush at my degenerate weakness?"
 Hence, lazy, mean, ignoble passions fly!
 Hence from my soul—'Tis gone, 'tis fled for ever;

E ij

And heav'n inspires my thoughts with righteous vengeance.

Thou shalt no more despise my offer'd love ;
No more Ismena shall upbraid my weakness.

[*Catches Hip. sword to stab herself.*]

Now, all ye kindred gods, look down and see
How I'll revenge you, and myself, on Phædra.

LYCON enters, and snatches away the Sword.

Lyc. Horror on horror! Theseus is return'd.

Phæd. Theseus! then what have I to do with life?

May I be snatch'd with winds, by earth o'erwhelm'd,
Rather than view the face of injur'd Theseus.
Now wider still my growing horrors spread,
My fame, my virtue, nay my phrenzy's fled:
Then view thy wretched race, imperial Jove,
If crimes enrage you, or misfortunes move;
On me your flames, on me your bolts employ,
Me if your anger spares, your pity should destroy.

[*Runs off.*]

Lyc. This may do service yet.

[*Exit Lycon, carries off the sword.*]

Hip. Is he return'd? thanks to the pitying gods!
Shall I again behold his awful eyes?
Again be folded in his loving arms?
Yet in the midst of joy I fear for Phædra;
I fear his warmth and unrelenting justice.
Oh! should her raging passion reach his ears,
His tender love, by anger fir'd, would turn

To burning rage ; [*trumpets sound*] “ as soft Cydonian oil,

“ Whose balmy juice glides o’er th’ untasting tongue,

“ Yet touch’d with fire, with hottest flames will blaze.”

But oh, ye pow’rs! I see his godlike form.

O ecstasy of joy ; he comes ! he comes !

THESEUS, Officer, and Guards, *enter*.

Is it my lord ! my father ! “ oh ! ’tis he :

“ I see him, touch him,” feel his known embraces ;

See all the father in his joyful eyes.

Where have you been, my lord ? what angry demon

Hid you from Crete ? from me ? what god has sav’d
you ?

Did not Philotas see you fall ? oh, answer me ;

And then I’ll ask a thousand questions more.

Thes. No ; but to save my life I feign’d my death ;

My horse and well-known arms confirm’d the tale,

And hinder’d farther search. ‘ This honest Greek

Conceal’d me in his house, and cur’d my wounds ;

Procur’d a vessel, and, to bless me more,

Accompanied my flight——

But this at leisure. Let me now indulge

A father’s fondness ; let me snatch thee thus,

Thus fold thee in my arms. Such, such, was I

[*Embraces Hippolitus.*

When first I saw thy mother, chaste Camilla ;

And much she lov’d me. Oh ! did Phædra view me

With half that fondness !——But she’s still unkind,

Else hasty joy had brought her to these arms,

To welcome me to liberty, to life,
And make that life a blessing. Come, my son,
Let us to Phædra.

Hip. Pardon me, my lord.

Thes. Forget her former treatment; she's too good
Still to persist in hatred to my son.

Hip. Oh! let me fly from Crete,—from you, [*Aside.*]
and Phædra.

Thes. My son, what means this turn? this sudden
start?

Why would you fly from Crete, and from your father?

Hip. Not from my father, but from lazy Crete;
To follow danger, and acquire renown;
To quell the monsters that escap'd your sword,
And make the world confess me Theseus' son.

Thes. What can this coldness mean?—Retire, my son,
[*Exit Hippolitus.*

While I attend the queen.—What shock is this?
Why tremble thus my limbs? why faints my heart?
Why am I thrill'd with fear, 'till now unknown?
Where's now the joy, the ecstasy and transport,
That warm'd my soul, and urg'd me on to Phædra?
Oh, had I never lov'd her, I'd been blest.

Sorrow and joy in love alternate reign;
Sweet is the bliss, distracting is the pain.

“ So when the Nile its fruitful deluge spreads,
“ And genial heat informs its slimy beds;
“ Here yellow harvests crowns the fertile plain,
“ There monstrous serpents fright the lab'ring
swain;

“ A various product fills the fatten’d sand,
 “ And the same floods enrich and curse the land.”

[Exit.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

LYCON enters, solus.

Lycon.

THIS may gain time ’till all my wealth’s embark’d,
 To ward my foes revenge, and finish mine,
 To shake that empire which I can’t possess.
 But then the Queen—she dies—why let her die ;
 Let wide destruction seize on all together,
 So Lycon live——A safe triumphant exile,
 Great in disgrace, and envied in his fall.
 The queen ! then try thy art, and work her passions.

PHÆDRA and Ladies enter.

Draw her to act what most her soul abhors,
 Possess her whole, and speak thyself in Phædra.

Phæd. Off, let me loose ; why, cruel barb’rous maids,
 Why am I barr’d from death, the common refuge,
 That spreads its hospitable arms for all ?
 “ Why must I drag the insufferable load
 “ Of foul dishonour, and despairing love ?”
 O length of pain ! “ am I so often dying,
 “ And yet not dead ?” feel I so oft death’s pangs,
 Nor once can find its ease ?

Lyc. Would you now die?

Now quit the field to your insulting foe?

Then shall he triumph o'er your blasted name:

Ages to come, the universe shall learn

The wide immortal infamy of Phædra:

And the poor babe, the idol of your soul,

The lovely image of your dear dead lord,

Shall be upbraided with his mother's crimes;

Shall bear your shame, shall sink beneath your faults,

Inherit your disgrace, but not your crown.

Phæd. Must he too fall, involv'd in my destruction,
And only live to curse the name of Phædra?

O dear, unhappy babe! "must I bequeath thee

"Only a sad inheritance of woe?"

Gods! cruel gods! can't all my pains atone,

Unless they reach my infant's guiltless head?

O lost estate! "when life's so sharp a torment,

"And death itself can't ease?"—Assist me, Lycon;

Advise, speak comfort to my troubled soul.

Lyc. 'Tis you must drive that trouble from your
soul;

"As streams when damm'd forget their ancient current,

"And wand'ring o'er their banks in other channels
flow;"

'Tis you must bend your thoughts from hopeless love,
And turn their course to Theseus' happy bosom,

"And crown his eager hopes with wish'd enjoyment:"

Then with fresh charms adorn your troubled looks,

Display the beauties first inspir'd his soul,

Sooth with your voice, and woo him with your eyes.

Phaed. Impossible! "what, woo him with these eyes,
 " Still wet with tears that flow'd—but not for Theseus?
 " This tongue, so us'd to sound another name?
 " What, take him to my arms? O awful Juno!
 " Touch, love, caress him, while my wand'ring fancy
 " On other objects strays? a lewd adultress
 " In the chaste bed? and in the father's arms,
 " O horrid thought! O execrable incest!)
 " Ev'n in the father's arms, embrace the son?"

Lyc. Yet you must see him, "lest impatient love
 " Should urge his temper to too nice a search,
 " And ill-tim'd absence should disclose your crime.
 " *Phaed.* Could I, when present to his awful eyes,
 " Conceal the wild disorders of my soul?
 " Would not my groans, my looks, my speech betray
 me?

" Betray thee, Phædra! then thou'rt not betray'd.
 " Live, live secure, adoring Crete conceals thee;
 " Thy pious love, and most endearing goodness
 " Will charm the kind Hippolitus to silence.
 " O wretched Phædra! O ill-guarded secret!
 " To foes alone disclos'd!

" *Lyc.* I needs must fear them,
 " Spite of their vows, their oaths, their imprecations.

" *Phaed.* Do imprecations, oaths, or vows avail?
 " I too have sworn, ev'n at the altar sworn,
 " Eternal love and endless faith to Theseus;
 " And yet am false, forsworn: the hallow'd shrine
 " That heard me swear, is witness to my falsehood.

" The youth, the very author of my crimes,
 " Ev'n he shall tell the fault himself inspir'd ;
 " The fatal eloquence that charm'd my soul
 " Shall lavish all its arts to my destruction."

Lyc. Hippolitus, Oh, he will tell it all——Destruction
 seize him.

With seeming grief, and aggravating pity,
 And more to blacken, will excuse your folly ;
 False tears shall wet his unrelenting eyes,
 And his glad heart with artful sighs shall heave ;
 Then Theseus——How will indignation swell
 His mighty heart ? how his majestic frame
 Will shake with rage too fierce, too swift for vent ?"

While the proud Scythian——

" How he'll expose you to the public scorn,
 " And loathing crowds shall murmur out their horror ?
 " Then the fierce Scythian——now methinks I see
 " His fiery eyes with sullen pleasures glow,
 " Survey your tortures, and insult your pangs ;
 " I see him, smiling on the pleas'd Ismena,
 " Point out with scorn the once-proud tyrant Phædra."

Phæd. Curst be his name ! may infamy attend him !
 May swift destruction fall upon his head,
 Hurl'd by the hand of those he most adores.

Lyc. By heav'n, prophetic truth inspires your tongue :
 " He shall endure the shame he means to give ;"
 For all the torments which he heaps on you,
 With just revenge, shall Theseus turn on him.

Phæd. Is't possible ? O Lycon ! O my refuge !
 A good old man ! thou oracle of wisdom !
 Declare the means, that Phædra may adore thee.

Lyc. Accuse him first.

Phaed. O heav'n's! accuse the guiltless?

Lyc. Then be accurs'd; let Theseus know your crime;
Let lasting infamy o'erwhelm your glory;
Let your foe triumph, and your infant fall——

“ Shake off this idle lethargy of pity ;

“ With ready war prevent th' invading foe,

“ Preserve your glory, and secure your vengeance ;

“ Be yours the fruit, security, and ease ;

“ The guilt, the danger, and the labour mine.”

Phaed. Heav'n's! Theseus comes.

Lyc. Declare your last resolves,

Phaed. Do you resolve, for Phædra can do nothing.

[*Exit Phædra.*

Lyc. Now, Lycon, heighten his impatient love,
Now raise his pity, now enflame his rage,
Quicken his hopes, then quash 'em with despair;
Work his tumultuous passions into phrenzy;
Unite them all, then turn them on the foe.

THESEUS enters.

Thes. Was that my queen, my wife, my idol Phædra?
Does she still shun me? O injurious heav'n!
Why did you give me back again to life?
Why did you save me from the rage of battle,
To let me fall by her more fatal hatred?

Lyc. Her hatred! no; she loves you with such
fondness

As none but that of Theseus e'er could equal:

“ Yet so the gods have doom'd, so heav'n will have it,

“ She ne'er must view her much-lov'd Theseus more.

" *Thes.* Not see her! by my suff'rings but I will,
 " Though troops embattled should oppose my passage,
 " And ready death shall guard the fatal way.
 " Not see her! oh! I'll clasp her in these arms,
 " Break through the idle bands that yet have held me,
 " And seize the joys my honest love may claim.

" *Lyc.* Is this a time for joy, when Phædra's grief—

" *Thes.* Is this a time for grief? is this my welcome
 " To air, to life, to liberty, and Crete?
 " Not this I hop'd, when urg'd by ardent love,
 " I wing'd my eager way to Phædra's arms;
 " Then, to my thoughts, relenting Phædra flew,
 " With open arms to welcome my return;
 " With kind endearing blame condemn'd my rashness,
 " And made me swear to venture out no more.
 " Oh! my warm soul, my boiling fancy glow'd
 " With charming hopes of yet-untasted joys;
 " New pleasures fill'd my mind, all dangers, pains,
 " Wars, wounds, defeats, in that dear hope were lost.
 " And does she now avoid my eager love?
 " Pursue me still with unrelenting hatred?
 " Invent new pains? detest, loath, shun my sight?
 " Fly my return, and sorrow for my safety?

" *Lyc.* Oh, think not so! for, by th' unerring gods,
 When first I told her of your wish'd return,
 When the lov'd sound of Theseus reach'd her ears,
 At that dear name she rear'd her drooping head,
 " Her feeble hands, and wat'ry eyes to heav'n,
 " To bless the bounteous gods: at that dear name
 " The raging tempest of her grief was calm'd;"
 Her sighs were hush'd, and tears forgot to flow.

Thes. Did my return bring comfort to her sorrow?
Then haste, conduct me to the lovely mourner.

Oh, I will kiss the pearly drops away;

"Suck from her rosy lips the fragrant sighs;

"With other sighs her panting breast shall heave,

"With other dews her swimming eyes shall melt,"

With other pangs her throbbing heart shall beat,

And all her sorrows shall be lost in love.

Lyc. Does Theseus burn with such unheard of passion?

And shall not she with out-stretch'd arms receive him;

"And with an equal ardor meet his vows?

"The vows of one so dear!" O righteous gods!

Why must the bleeding heart of Theseus bear

Such tort'ring pangs? while Phædra, dead to love,

Now with accusing eyes on angry heav'n

Stedfastly gazes, and upbraids the gods;

"Now with dumb piercing grief and humble shame,

"Fixes her gloomy watry orbs to earth;

"Now burst with swelling anguish, rends the skies"

With loud complaints of her outrageous wrongs.

Thes. Wrongs! is she wrong'd? and lives he yet
who wrong'd her?

Lyc. He lives, so great, so happy, so belov'd,
That Phædra scarce can hope, scarce wish revenge.

Thes. Shall Theseus live, and not revenge his Phædra?

Gods! shall this arm, renown'd for righteous vengeance,

For quelling tyrants, and redressing wrongs,

Now fail? now first, when Phædra's injur'd, fail?

O let us haste.

" Speak, Lycon, haste, declare the secret villain,

" The wretch so meanly base to injure Phædra,

" So rashly brave to dare the sword of Theseus.

" *Lyc.* I dare not speak ; but sure her wrongs are mighty.

" The pale cold hue that deadens all her charms,

" Her sighs, her hollow groans, her flowing tears

" Make me suspect her monstrous grief will end her.

" *Thes.* End her ! end Theseus first, and all mankind ;

" But most that villain, that detested slave,

" That brutal coward, that dark lurking wretch.

" *Lyc.* Oh, noble heat of unexampled love !

" This Phædra hop'd, when, in the midst of grief,

" In the wild torrent of o'erwhelming sorrows,

" She groaning still invoc'd, still call'd on Theseus.

" *Thes.* Did she then name me ? did the weeping charmer

" Invoke my name, and call for aid on Theseus ?

" Oh ! that lov'd voice upbraided my delay.

" Why then this stay ?" I come, I fly, O Phædra !

Lead on.—Now, dark disturber of my peace,

If now thou'rt known, what luxury of vengeance—

Haste, lead, conduct me.

" *Lyc.* Oh ! I beg you stay.

" *Thes.* What, stay when Phædra calls ?"

Lyc. " Oh ! on my lance,

" By all the gods, my lord, I beg you stay ;"

Oh ! I conjure you stay,

As you respect your peace, your life, your glory ;

" As Phædra's days are precious to your soul ;"

By all your love, by Phædra's sorrows stay.

Thes. Where lies the danger? wherefore should I stay?

Lyc. Your sudden presence would surprize her soul,
Renew the galling image of her wrongs,

“Revive her sorrow, indignation, shame;”

And all your son would strike her from your eyes.

Thes. My son!——But he’s too good, too brave to wrong her.——

Whence then that shocking change, that strong surprize,

That fright that seiz’d him at the name of Phædra?

Lyc. Was he surpriz’d? that shew’d at least remorse?

Thes. Remorse! for what? by heav’n’s, my troubled thoughts

Presage some dire attempts.—Say, what remorse?

Lyc. I would not—yet I must: this you command;

This Phædra orders; thrice her fault’ring tongue

Bad me unfold the guilty scene to Theseus;

Thrice with loud cries recall’d me on my way,

And blam’d my speed, and chid my rash obedience,

“Lest the unwelcome tale should wound your peace.”

At last, with looks serenely sad, she cried:

Go tell it all; but in such artful words,

Such tender accents, and such melting sounds,

As may appease his rage, and move his pity;

As may incline him to forgive his son

A grievous fault, but still a fault of love.

Thes. Of love! what strange suspicions rack my soul!

As you regard my peace, declare what love!

Lyc. Thus urg'd, I must declare. Yet, pitying heav'n!

Why must I speak? why must unwilling Lycon
Accuse the prince of impious love to Phædra?

Thes. Love to his mother! To the wife of Theseus!

Lyc. Yes, at the moment first he view'd her eyes,
Ev'n at the altar, when you join'd your hands,
His easy heart receiv'd the guilty flame,
And from that time he press'd her with his passion.

Thes. Then 'twas for this she banish'd him from Crete;
I thought it hatred all. O righteous hatred!

Forgive me, heav'n; forgive me, injur'd Phædra,
That I in secret have condemn'd thy justice.
Oh! 'twas all just, and Theseus shall revenge,
Ev'n on his son, revenge his Phædra's wrongs.

Lyc. What easy tools are these blunt honest heroes,
Who, with keen hunger, gorge the naked hook,
Prevent the bait the statesman's art prepares,
And post to ruin—"Go, believing fool,
"Go act thy far-fam'd justice on thy son,
"Next on thyself, and both make way for Lycon."

[*Aside.*]

Thes. Ha! am I sure she's wrong'd? perhaps 'tis
malice.

Slave, make it clear, make good your accusation,
Or treble fury shall revenge my son.

Lyc. Am I then doubted? can Phædra, or your Lycon,
Be thought to forge such execrable falsehoods?

"Gods! when the queen unwillingly complains,
"Can you suspect her truth? O godlike Theseus!

"Is this the love you bear unhappy Phædra?"

"Is this her hop'd-for aid? Go, wretched matron,

"Sigh to the winds, and rend th' unpitying heav'ns

"With thy vain sorrows; since relentless Theseus,

"Thy hope, thy refuge, Theseus will not hear thee."

Thes. "Not hear my Phædra! not revenge her wrongs!"

Speak, make thy proofs, and then his doom's as fix'd,
As when Jove nods, and high Olympus shakes,
And fate his voice obeys.

Lyc. Yet stay; bear witness, heav'n!

[*fetches a sword.*]

With what reluctance I produce this sword,
This fatal proof against th' unhappy prince,
Lest it should work your justice to his ruin,
And prove he aim'd at force as well as incest.

Thes. Gods; 'tis illusion all! "Is this the sword

"By which Procrustes, Scyron, Pallas fell?

"Is this the weapon which my darling son

"Swore to employ in nought but acts of honour?

"Now, faithful youth, thou nobly hast fulfill'd

"Thy gen'rous promise. Oh, most injur'd Phædra!

"Why did I trust to his deceitful form?

"Why blame thy justice, or suspect thy truth?"

Lyc. Had you this morn beheld his ardent eyes,
Seen his arm lock'd in her dishevell'd hair,
That weapon glitt'ring o'er her trembling bosom,
Whilst she with screams refus'd his impious love,
Entreating death, and rising to the wound!

"Oh! had you seen her, when th' affrighted youth

“Retir’d at your approach; had you then seen her,
 “In the chaste transports of becoming fury,
 “Seize on the sword to pierce her guiltless bosom;”
 Had you seen this, you could not doubt her truth.

Thes. Oh, impious monster! oh, forgive me, Phædra!
 And may the gods inspire my injur’d soul
 With equal vengeance that may suit his crimes.

Lyc. For Phædra’s sake forbear to talk of vengeance;
 That, with new pains, would wound her tender breast,
 Send him away from Crete, and by his absence
 Give Phædra quiet, and afford him mercy.

Thes. “Mercy! for what? oh! well has he rewarded
 “Poor Phædra’s mercy.—O most barb’rous traitor!
 “To wrong such beauty, and insult such goodness.”
 Mercy! what’s that? a virtue coin’d by villains,
 “Who praise the weakness which supports their
 crimes.”

Be mute, and fly; lest when my rage is rous’d,
 Thou for thyself in vain implore my mercy.

Lyc. Dull fool, I laugh at mercy more than thou dost;
 More than I do the justice thou’rt so fond of.
 Now come, young hero, to thy father’s arms,
 Receive the due reward of haughty virtue;
 Now boast thy race, and laugh at earth-born Lycon.

[*Aside and Exit.*]

HIPPOLITUS enters.

Thes. Yet can it be?—Is this th’ incestuous villain?
 “How great his presence, how erect his look,
 “How ev’ry grace, how all his virtuous mother
 “Shines in his face, and charms me from his eyes!”

" O Neptune! O great founder of our race!

" Why was he fram'd with such a godlike look?"

Why wears he not some most detested form,

" Baleful to sight, as horrible to thought;"

That I might act my justice without grief,

Punish the villain, nor regret the son?

Hip. May I presume to ask, what secret care
Broods in your breast, and clouds your royal brow?

Why dart your awful eyes those angry beams,

And fright Hippolitus they us'd to chear?

Thes. Answer me first. When call'd to wait on
Phædra,

What sudden fear surpriz'd your troubled soul?

Why did your ebbing blood forsake your cheeks?

Why did you hasten from your father's arms,

To shun the queen your duty bids you please?

Hip. My lord, to please the queen I'm forc'd to shun
her,

And keep this hated object from her sight.

Thes. Say, what's the cause of her invet'rate hatred?

Hip. My lord, as yet I never gave her cause.

Thes. " O were it so!" [*Aside.*] When last did you
attend her?

Hip. When last attend her!—O unhappy queen!

Your error's known; yet I disdain to wrong you;

" Or to betray a fault myself have caus'd." [*Aside.*

When last attend her?

Thes. Answer me directly;

Nor dare to trifle with your father's rage.

Hip. My lord, this very morn I saw the queen,

Thes. What past?

Hip. I ask'd permission to retire.

Thes. And was that all?

Hip. My lord, I humbly beg,
With the most low submissions, ask no more.

Thes. "Yet you don't answer with your low submissions."

Answer, or never hope to see me more.

Hip. Too much he knows, I fear, without my telling;
And the poor Queen's betray'd, and lost for ever. [*Aside.*

Thes. He changes, gods! and falters at the question.
His fears, his words, his looks declare him guilty. [*Aside.*

Hip. Why do you frown, my lord? why turn away?
As from some loathsome monster, not your son?

Thes. Thou art that monster, and no more my son.
Not one of those of the most horrid form,
Of which my hand has eas'd the burthen'd earth,
Was half so shocking to my sight as thou.

Hip. Where am I, gods? is that my father Theseus?
"Am I awake?" am I Hippolitus.

Thes. Thou art that fiend.—Thou art Hippolitus,
Thou art.—O fall! O fatal stain to honour!
How had my vain imagination form'd thee?
Brave as Alcides, and as Minos just.
Sometimes it led me through the maze of war;
There it survey'd thee ranging through the field,
Mowing down troops, and dealing out destruction.
"Sometimes with wholesome laws reforming states,
"Crowning their happy joys with peace and plenty;"
While you———

Hip. With all my father's soul inspir'd,
 Burnt with impatient thirst of early honour,
 To hunt through bloody fields the chace of glory,
 And bless your age with trophies like your own.
 Gods, how that warm'd me ! how my throbbing heart
 Leapt to the image of my father's joy,
 When you should strain me in your folding arms,
 And with kind raptures, " and with sobbing joys,
 " Commend my valour and confess your son !
 " How did I think my glorious toil o'erpaid ?
 " Then great indeed, and in my father's love,
 " With more than conquest crown'd ?"
Cry, ' Go on, Hippolitus.
 Go tread the rugged paths of daring honour ;
 Practise all the strictest and austere virtue,
 And all the rigid laws of righteous Minos :
 Theseus, thy father Theseus will reward thee.'

Thes. Reward thee !——Yes ; as Minos would reward thee.

Was Minos then thy pattern ! and did Minos,
 The great, the good, the just, the righteous Minos,
 " The judge of hell, and oracle of earth,"
 Did he inspire adultery, force, and incest ?

" *Ismena appears.*

" *Ism.* Ha ! what's this ?

[*Aside.*"]

Hip. Amazement ! incest !

Thes. Incest with Phædra, with thy mother Phædra,

Hip. This charge so unexpected, so amazing,

So new, so strange, impossible to thought,
Stuns my astonish'd soul, and ties my voice.

Thes. Then let this wake thee, this once-glorious
sword,

With which thy father arm'd thy infant hand,
Not for this purpose. O abandon'd slave!
O early villain! most detested coward!
With this my instrument of youthful glory!
With this t'invade the spotless Phædra's honour!—
Phædra, my life, my better half, my queen!
That very Phædra, for whose just defence
The gods would claim thy sword.

Hip. Amazement! death!

Heav'ns! durst I raise the far-fam'd sword of Theseus
Against his queen, against my mother's bosom?

Thes. If not; declare when, where, and how you
lost it?

How Phædra gain'd it?—O all ye gods! he's silent.
Why was it bar'd? whose bosom was it aim'd at?
What meant thy arm advanc'd, thy glowing cheeks,
Thy hand, heart, eyes? O villain! monstrous villain!

Hip. Is there no way, "no thought, no beam of
light?

"No clue to guide me thro' this gloomy maze,"

To clear my honour, yet preserve my faith?

"None, none, ye pow'rs! and must I groan beneath

"This execrable hoard of foul dishonour?

"Must Theseus suffer such unheard of torture?

"Theseus, my father! No." I'll break thro' all;

All oaths, all vows, all idle imprecations

I'll give them to the winds. Hear me, my Lord ;
Hear your wrong'd son. The sword—O fatal vow !
“ Ensnaring oaths, and thou, rash thoughtless fool,
“ To bind thyself in voluntary chains ;
“ Yet to thy fatal trust continue firm !
“ Beneath disgrace, though infamous, yet honest.”
Yet hear me, father : May the righteous gods
Show'r all their curses on this wretched head ;
Oh, may they doom me——

Thes. Yes, the gods will doom thee.

The sword, the sword!——Now swear, and call to
witness

Heav'n, hell, and earth, I mark it not from one
That breathes beneath such complicated guilt.

Hip. Was that like guilt, when with expanded arms
I sprang to meet you at your wish'd return ?

Does this appear like guilt, when thus serene,
With eyes erect, and visage unappall'd,

Fix'd on that awful face, I stand the charge,
Amaz'd, not fearing ? “ Say, if I am guilty :

“ Where are the conscious looks, the face now pale,

“ Now flushing red, the down-cast haggard eyes,

“ Or fix'd on earth, or slowly rais'd to catch

“ A fearful view, then sunk again with horror ?

“ *Thes.* This is for raw, untaught, unfinish'd villains.

“ Thou in thy bloom hast reach'd th' abhor'd per-
fection :

“ Thy even looks could wear a peaceful calm,

“ The beauteous stamp (O Heav'ns !) of faultless
virtue;

" While thy foul heart contriv'd this horrid deed !
 " O harden'd fiend ! I'll hear no more !
 " Disturb thy soul, or ruffle thy smooth brow !
 " What, no remorse ! no qualms ! no pricking pangs !
 " No feeble struggle of rebelling honour !
 " Oh ! 'twas thy joy, thy secret hoard of bliss,
 " To dream, to ponder, act it o'er in thought ;
 " To doat, to dwell on ; as rejoicing misers
 " Brood o'er their precious stores of secret gold."

Hip. Must I not speak ? Then say, unerring Heav'n,
 Why was I born with such a thirst of glory ?
 Why did this morning dawn to my dishonour ?
 Why did not pitying fate, with ready death,
 Prevent the guilty day ?

Thes. Guilty indeed.

Ev'n at the time you heard your father's death ;
 " And such a father (O immortal gods !)
 " As held thee dearer than his life and glory !
 " When thou should'st rend the skies with clam'rous
 grief,
 " Beat thy sad breast, and tear thy starting hair ;"
 Then to my bed to force your impious way ;
 " With horrid lust t'insult my yet warm urn ;"
 Make me the scorn of hell, and sport for fiends !
 These are the fun'ral honours paid to Theseus ;
 These are the sorrows, these the hallow'd rites,
 To which you'd call your father's hov'ring spirit.

ISMENA enters.

Ism. Hear me, my lord, ere yet you fix his doom :

[Turning to Theseus.

Hear one that comes to shield his injur'd honour,
And guard his life with hazard of her own.

Thes. Tho' thou'rt the daughter of my hated foe;
"Tho' ev'n thy beauty's loathsome to my eyes;"
Yet justice bids me hear thee.

Ism. Thus I thank you. [*Kneels.*

Then know, mistaken prince, his honest soul
Could ne'er be sway'd by impious love to Phædra,
Since I before engag'd his early vows;

"With all my wiles subdu'd his struggling heart;
"For long his duty struggled with his love."

Thes. Speak, is this true? on thy obedience, speak.

Hip. So charg'd, I own the dang'rous truth; I own
Against her will, I lov'd the fair Ismena.

Thes. Canst thou be only clear'd by disobedience,
And justified by crimes? What, love my foe!

"Love one descended from a race of tyrants,
"Whose blood yet reeks on my avenging sword!"

I'm curst each moment I delay thy fate.

Haste to the shades, "and tell the happy Pallas

"Ismena's flames, and let him taste such joys

"As thou'giv'st me;" go tell applauding Minos

The pious love you bore his daughter Phædra;

Tell it the chatt'ring ghosts, and hissing furies,

Tell it the grinning fiends, till hell sound nothing

To thy pleas'd ears but Phædra, thy mother Phædra!

Here, guards.

CRATANDER and Guards enter.

Seize him, Cratander; take this guilty sword,

Let his own hand avenge the crimes it acted,

And bid him die, at least, like Theseus' son.

Take him away, and execute my orders.

Hip. Heav'ns! how that strikes me! how it wounds
my soul.

To think of your unutterable sorrows,
When you shall find Hippolitus was guiltless!
Yet when you know the innocence you doom'd,
When you shall mourn your son's unhappy fate,
Oh, I beseech you, by the love you bore me,
With my last words (my words will then prevail)
Oh, for my sake forbear to touch your life,
Nor wound again Hippolitus in Theseus.
"Let all my virtues, all my joys survive
"Fresh in your breast, but be my woes forgot;
"The woes which fate, and not my father, wrought.
"Oh, let me dwell for ever in your thoughts,
"Let me be honour'd still, but not deplor'd."

Thes. "Then thy chief care is for thy father's life,
"O blooming hypocrite! O young dissembler!
"Well hast thou shewn the care thou tak'st of
Theseus."

O all ye gods! how this enflames my fury.
I scarce can hold my rage; my eager hands
Tremble to reach thee. No, dishonour'd Theseus,
Blot not thy fame with such a monster's blood.
Snatch him away.

Hip. Lead on. Farewell, Ismena. [*Exit guarded.*]

Ism. Oh! take me with him, let me share his fate.
O awful Theseus! yet revoke his doom.
"See, see the very ministers of death,

"Tho' bred to blood, yet shrink, and wish to save him."

Thes. Slaves, villains, drag her away.

"*Ism.* Oh, tear me, cut me, till my sever'd limbs

"Grow to my lord, and share the pains he suffers.

"*Thes.* Villains, away!"

Ism. O Theseus! hear me, hear me.

"*Thes.* Away, nor taint me with thy loathsome touch.

"Off, woman.

"*Ism.*" Oh let me stay! I'll tell you all.

"[*Exit Theseus.*

"Already gone. Tell it, ye conscious walls;

"Bear it, ye winds, upon your pitying wings;

"Resound it, Fame, with all your hundred tongues.

"O hapless youth! all heaven conspires against you.

"The conscious walls conceal the fatal secret;

"Th' untainted winds refuse th' infecting load,

"And Fame itself is mute. Nay, ev'n Ismena,

"Thy own Ismena's sworn to thy destruction.

"But still, whate'er the cruel gods design,

"In the same fate our equal stars combine,

"And he who dooms thy death pronounces mine."

Thes. Too well I know the truth;

What cou'd she tell me but fictitious art,

By woman's art deriv'd to turn the course

Of justice from a wretch, whose death both gods

And men demand of Theseus.

ACT V. SCENE I.

PHÆDRA and LYCON enter.

Lycon.

ACCUSE yourself! On my knees I beg you,
By all the gods, recal the fatal message.
Heav'ns! will you stand the dreaded rage of Theseus;
And brand your fame, and work your own destruction?

Phaed. By thee I'm branded, and by thee destroy'd;
Thou bosom serpent, thou alluring fiend!
Yet sha'n't you boast the miseries you cause,
Nor 'scape the ruin you have brought on all.

Lyc. Was it not your command? has faithful Lycon
E'er spoke, e'er thought, "design'd, contriv'd, or
acted?

"Has he done aught" without the queen's consent?

"*Phaed.* Plead'st thou consent to what thou first
inspir'dst?

"Was that consent? O senseless politician!

"When adverse passions struggl'd in my breast;

"When anger, fear, love, sorrow, guilt, despair,

"Drove out my reason, and usurp'd my soul.

"Yet this consent you plead, O faithless Lycon!

"Oh, only zealous for the fame of Phædra!

"With this you blot my name, and clear your own;

"And what's my phrenzy shall be call'd my crime,

“What then is thine? thou cool, deliberate villain;

“Thou wise, fore-thinking, weighing politician!

Lyc. Oh! ’twas so black a charge, my tongue recoil’d
At its own sound, and horror shook my soul.

Yet still, tho’ pierc’d with such amazing anguish,

Such was my zeal, so much I lov’d my queen,

I broke through all, to save the life of Phædra.

Phæd. What’s life? O all ye gods! can life atone

For all the monstrous crimes by which ’tis bought?

Or can I live, when thou, O soul of honour!

O early hero! by my crimes art ruin’d?

Perhaps ev’n now the great unhappy youth

Falls by the sordid hands of butchering villains;

Now, now he bleeds, he dies.—“O perjur’d traitor!

“See, his rich blood in purple torrents flows,

“And Nature sallies in unbidden groans;

“Now mortal pangs distort his lovely form,

“His rosy beauties fade; his starry eyes

“Now darkling swim, and fix their closing beams;

“Now in short gasps his lab’ring spirit heaves,

“And weakly flutters on his fault’ring tongue,

“And struggles into sound.” Hear, monster, hear,

With his last breath he curses perjur’d Phædra;

He summons Phædra to the bar of Minos:

Thou too shalt there appear; to torture thee

Whole hell shall be employ’d, and suff’ring Phædra

Shall find some ease, to see thee still more wretched.

Lyc. O all ye pow’rs! O Phædra! hear me, hear me,

“By all my zeal, by all my anxious cares,

“By those unhappy crimes I wrought to serve you.”

By these old wither'd limbs, and hoary hairs,
By all my tears—O heav'ns! she minds me not;
She hears not my complaints. O wretched Lycon!
To what art thou reserv'd?

Phæd. Reserv'd to all
The sharpest, slowest pains that earth can furnish,
To all I wish—On Phædra—Guards, secure him.

Guards enter. Lycon carried off.

Ha, Theseus!—Gods! my freezing blood congeals,
And all my thoughts, designs, and words are lost.

THESEUS enters.

Thes. Dost thou at last repent? O lovely Phædra!
At last with equal ardor meet my vows?
“O dear-bought blessing!—Yet I'll not complain,
“Since now my sharpest grief is all o'er paid,
“And only heightens joy.—Then haste my charmer,
“Let's feast our famish'd souls with amorous riot,
“With fiercest bliss atone for our delay,
“And in a moment love the age we've lost.”

Phæd. Stand off; approach me, touch me not; fly
hence,
Far as the distant skies or deepest centre.

Thes. Amazement! death!—Ye gods who guide the
world,
What can this mean? “So fierce a detestation,
“So strong abhorrence!—Speak, exquisite tormentor!
“Was it for this your summons fill'd my soul
“With eager raptures, and tumultuous transports?

"Ev'n painful joys and agonies of bliss."

Did I for this obey my Phædra's call,

And fly with trembling haste to meet her arms?

And am I thus receiv'd? O cruel Phædra!

"Was it for this you rouz'd my drowsy soul

"From the dull lethargy of hopeless love?

"And dost thou only shew those beauteous eyes

"To wake despair, and blast me with their beams?

"*Phæd.* Oh, were that all to which the gods have
doom'd me!

"But angry heav'n has laid in store for Theseus

"Such perfect mischief, such transcendent woe,

"That the black image shocks my frightened soul,

"And the words die on my reluctant tongue.

"*Thes.* Fear not to speak it; that harmonious voice

"Will make the saddest tale of sorrow pleasing,

"And charm the grief it brings. Thus let me hear it,

"Thus in thy sight; thus gazing on those eyes

"I can support the utmost spite of fate,

"And stand the rage of Heav'n.—Approach, my fair."

Phæd. Off, or I fly for ever from thy sight:

Shall I embrace the father of Hippolitus?

Thes. Forget the villain; drive him from your soul,

"*Phæd.* Can I forget, or drive him from my soul?

"Oh! he will still be present to my eyes;

"His words will ever echo in my ears;

"Still will he be the torture of my days,

"Bane of my life, and ruin of my glory.

"*Thes.* And mine and all. O most abandon'd
villain!

" O lasting scandal to our godlike race !

" That could contrive a crime so foul as incest.

" *Phæd.* Incest ! Oh, name it not !

" The very mention shakes my inmost soul !

" The gods are startled in their peaceful mansions ;

" And nature sickens at the shocking sound.

" Thou brutal wretch ! thou execrable monster !

" To break thro' all the laws that early flow

" From untaught reason, and distinguish man ;

" Mix like the senseless herd with bestial lust,

" Mother and son preposterously wicked :

" To banish from thy soul the reverence due

" To honour, nature, and the genial bed,

" And injure one so great, so good as Theseus !

" *Thes.* To injure one so great, so good as Phædra."

O Slave ! to wrong such purity as thine ;

Such dazzling brightness, such exalted virtue.

Phæd. Virtue ! all-seeing gods, ye know my virtue.

Must I support all this ? O righteous Heav'n !

Can't I yet speak ? Reproach I could have borne,

Pointed his satire's stings, and edg'd his rage :

But to be prais'd—Now, Minos, I defy thee ;

Ev'n all thy dreadful magazines of pains,

Stones, furies, wheels, are slight to what I suffer,

And Hell itself's relief.

Thes. What's hell to thee ?

" What crimes could'st thou commit ? or what reproaches

" Could innocence so pure as Phædra's fear ?

" Oh ! thou'rt the chastest matron of thy sex,

“ The fairest pattern of excelling virtue.
“ Our latest annals shall record thy glory,
“ The maid’s example, and the matron’s theme.
“ Each skilful artist shall express thy form
“ In animated gold. The threat’ning sword
“ Shall hang for ever o’er thy snowy bosom ;
“ Such heav’nly beauty on thy face shall bloom
“ As shall almost excuse the villain’s crime ;
“ But yet that firmness, that unshaken virtue
“ As still shall make the monster more detested.
“ Where’er you pass, the crowded way shall sound
“ With joyful cries, and endless acclamations.
“ And when aspiring bards in daring strains
“ Shall raise some heav’nly matron to the pow’rs,
“ They’ll say, she’s great, she’s true, she’s chaste as
Phædra.

“ *Phæd.* This might have been—But now, O cruel
stars !

“ Now, as I pass, the crowded way shall sound
“ With hissing scorn, and murm’ring detestation.
“ The latest annals shall record my shame ;
“ And when th’ avenging muse with pointed rage
“ Would sink some impious woman down to hell,
“ She’ll say, she’s false, she’s base, she’s foul as Phædra.
“ *Thes.*” Hadst thou been foul, had horrid violation

Cast any stains on purity like thine,
They’re wash’d already in the villain’s blood :
The very sword, his instrument of horror,
“ Ere this time drench’d in his incestuous heart,”
Hath done thee justice, “ and aveng’d the crimes,
“ He us’d it to perform.”

Messenger enters.

Mess. Alas! my lord,
Ere this the prince is dead. I saw Cratander
Give him a sword; I saw him boldly take it,
Rear it on high, and point it to his breast:
With steady hands, and with disdainful looks,
As one that fear'd not death, but scorn'd to die,
And not in battle—A loud clamour follow'd;
And the surrounding soldiers hid from sight,
But all pronounc'd him dead.

Phæd. Is he then dead?

Thes. Yes, yes, he's dead; and dead by my command.
And in this dreadful act of mournful justice
I'm more renown'd than in my dear-bought laurels.

Phæd. Then thou'rt renown'd indeed. — O happy
Theseus!

Oh, only worthy of the love of Phædra!
Haste then, let's join our well-met hands together,
Unite for ever, and defy the gods
To shew a pair so eminently wretched.

Thes. Wretched! for what? for what the world
must praise me;
For what the nations shall adore my justice,
A villain's death.

Phæd. Hippolitus a villain!
Oh, he was all his godlike sire could wish,
The pride of Theseus, and the hopes of Crete.

Nor did the bravest of his godlike race
Tread with such early hopes the paths of honour.

Thes. What can this mean? declare ambiguous
Phædra,

“ Say, whence these shifting gusts of clashing rage ?

“ Why are thy doubted speeches dark and troubled,

“ As Cretan seas when vex’d by warring winds ?”

Why is a villain, with alternate passion,
Accus’d and prais’d, detested and deplor’d ?

Phæd. Canst thou not guess ?

Canst thou not read it in my furious passions ?

In all the wild disorders of my soul ?

Couldst thou not see it in the noble warmth

That urg’d the darling youth to acts of honour ?

“ Couldst thou not find it in the gen’rous truth

“ Which sparkled in his eyes, and open’d in his face ?”

Couldst not perceive it in the chaste reserve,

In every word and look, each godlike act,

Couldst thou not see Hippolitus was guiltless ?

Thes. Guiltless ! O all ye gods ! what can this mean ?

Phæd. Mean I, that the guilt is mine, that virtuous

Phædra,

The maid’s example, and the matron’s theme,

With bestial passion woo’d your loathing son.

And when deny’d, with impious accusation

Sullied the lustre of his shining honour ;

Of my own crimes accus’d the faultless youth,

And with ensnaring wiles destroy’d that virtue

I tried in vain to shake.

Thes. Is he then guiltless ?

Guiltless! then what art thou?—and oh, just Heav'n!
What a detested parricide is Theseus!

Phæd. What am I? what indeed, but one more black
Than earth or hell e'er bore! "O horrid mixture
"Of crimes and woes, of parricide and incest,
"Perjury, murder,—to arm the erring father
"Against the guiltless son." O impious Lycon,
In what a hell of woes thy arts have plung'd me!

Thes. Lycon!—Here, guards.—O most abandon'd
villain!

Secure him, seize him, drag him piece-meal hither.

Guards enter.

Guard. Who has, my Lord, incurr'd your high dis-
pleasure?

Thes. Who can it be, ye gods, but perjur'd Lycon!
Who can inspire such storms of rage, but Lycon?
Where has my sword left one so black, but Lycon?
Where, wretched Theseus! in thy bed and heart,
The very darling of my soul and eyes.
O beauteous fiend! But trust not to thy form.
"You too, my son, was fair; your manly beauties
"Charm'd ev'ry heart (O Heav'ns!) to your destruc-
tion;

"You too were good, your virtuous soul abhorr'd
"The crimes for which you died. O impious Phædra!"
Incestuous fury! execrable murd'ress!
Is there revenge on earth, or pain in hell,
Can art invent, or boiling rage suggest,
Ev'n endless torture, which thou shalt not suffer?

Phæd. And is there aught on earth I would not suffer?

Oh, were there vengeance equal to my crimes,
Thou needst not claim it, most unhappy youth,
From any hands but mine; t' avenge thy fate
I'd court the fiercest pains, "and sue for tortures,"
And Phædra's suff'rings should atone for thine;
Ev'n now I fall a victim to thy wrongs;
Ev'n now a fatal draught works out my soul;
Ev'n now it curdles in my shrinking veins
The lazy blood, and freezes at my heart.

LYCON brought in.

Thes. Hast thou escap'd my wrath? Yet, impious
Lycon,

On thee I'll empty all my hoard of vengeance,
And glut my boundless rage.

Lyc. O mercy, mercy!

Thes. Such thou shalt find as thy best deeds deserve;
"Such as thy guilty soul can hope from Theseus;
"Such as thou shew'd'st to poor Hippolitus."

Lyc. "Oh! chain me; whip me; let me be the scorn
"Of sordid rabbles, and insulting crowds;"
Give me but life, and make that life most wretched.

"*Phæd.* Art thou so base, so spiritless a slave?
"Not so the lovely youth thy arts have ruin'd;
"Not so he bore the fate to which you doom'd him."

Thes. "O abject villain!—Yet it gives me joy
"To see the fears that shake thy guilty soul,

H

"Enhance thy crimes, and antedate thy woes.

"Oh, how thou'lt howl thy fearful soul away!

"While laughing crowds shall echo to thy cries,

"And make thy pains their sport. Haste, hence,
away with him,"

Drag him to all the torments earth can furnish;

Let him be rack'd and gash'd, impal'd alive;

Then let the mangled monster, fix'd on high,

Grin o'er the shouting crowds, and glut their vengeance,

Hence! away! [Lycón borne off.

And is this all? and art thou now appeas'd?

Will this atone for poor Hippolitus?

O ungorg'd appetite! O rav'nous thirst

Of a son's blood! what, not a day, a moment?

Phæd. A day, a moment! oh, thou shouldst have
staid

Years, ages, all the round of circling time,

Ere touch the life of that consummate youth.

Thes. And yet with joy I flew to his destruction,

Boasted his fate, and triumph'd in his ruin.

Not this I promis'd to his dying mother,

When in her mortal pangs she sighing gave me

The last cold kisses from her trembling lips,

Her last words now falt'ring from her tongue,

"And reach'd her feeble wand'ring hands to mine;

"When her last breath now quiv'ring at her mouth,"

Implor'd my goodness to her lovely son,

To her Hippolitus. He, alas! descends

An early victim to the lazy shades,

(O Heav'n and earth!) by Theseus doom'd, descends.

Phæd. He's doom'd by Theseus, but accus'd by
Phædra,

By Phædra's madness, and by Lycon's hatred.

Yet with my life I expiate my phrenzy,

And die for thee my headlong rage destroy'd.

"Thee I pursue, (O great ill-fated youth!)

"Pursue thee still, but now with chaste desires;

"Thee through the dismal waste of gloomy death,

"Thee through the glimm'ring dawn, and purer day,

"Through all th' Elysian plains——O righteous
Minos!

"Elysian plains! There he and his Ismena

"Shall sport for ever, shall for ever drink

"Immortal love; while I far off shall howl

"In lonely plains; while all the blackest ghosts

"Shrink from the baleful sight of one more monstrous,

"And more accurst than they."

Thes. I too must die;

I too must once more see the burning shore

Of livid Acheron and black Cocytus,

Whence no Alcides will release me now.

Phæd. Then why this stay? come on, let's plunge
together.

See, Hell sets wide its adamantine gates;

"See, through the sable gates the black Cocytus

"In smoaky circles rolls its fiery waves;"

Hear, hear the stunning harmonies of woe,

The din of rattling chains, of clashing whips,

Of groans, or loud complaints, of piercing shrieks,

That wide through all its gloomy world resound.

H ij

How huge-Mægara stalks! what streaming fires
 Blaze from her glaring eyes! what serpents curl
 In horrid wreaths, and hiss around her head!
 Now, now she drags me to the bar of Minos:
 See how the awful judges of the dead
 Look stedfast hate, and horrible dismay!
 See, Minos turns away his loathing eyes;
 "Rage choaks his struggling words; the fatal urn
 "Drops from his trembling hand." O all ye gods!
 What, Lycon here? O execrable villain!
 Then am I still on earth? By hell I am,
 A fury now, a scourge preserv'd for Lycon.
 See, the just beings offer to my vengeance
 That impious slave. Now, Lycon, for revenge:
 Thanks, Heaven, 'tis here. I'll strike it to his heart,

[Mistaking Theseus for Lycon, offers to stab him.]

"Guards. Heav'ns! 'tis your lord."

Phæd. My lord! O equal Heav'n!

Must each portentous moment rise in crimes,
 And sallying life go off in parricide?
*This glimpse of reason some indulgent God
 Hath granted me to close the scene of guilt.*
 Then trust not thy slow drugs.—Thus sure of death
 Compleat thy horrors.—And if this suffice not,
 Thou, Minos, do the rest. [Stabs herself.]

Thes. *Desp'rate to the last—in ev'ry passion furious.*

Phæd. I ask not,

*Nor do I hope from thee forgiveness, Theseus;
 But yet amidst my crimes remember still,
 That my offence was not my nature's fault,*

*The wrath of Venus, which pursues our race,
First kindled in my breast those guilty fires.*

*Resistless goddess, I confess thy pow'r,
To thee I make libation of my blood.*

*Venus, avert thy hate—may wretched Phædra
Prove the last victim of her fated line.*

[Dies.

*Thes. "At length she's quiet," she's dead;
And now earth bears not such a wretch as Theseus.*

"Yet I'll obey Hippolitus, and live:

"Then to the wars; and as the Corybantines,

"With clashing shields and braying trumpets, drown'd

"The cries of infant Jove, I'll stifle conscience,

"And Nature's murmurs, in the din of arms.

"But what are arms to me? is he not dead

"For whom I fought? for whom my hoary age

"Glow'd with the boiling heat of youth in battle?"

How then to drag a wretched life beneath

An endless round of still-returning woes,

And all the gnawing pangs of vain remorse?

What torment's this?—Therefore, O greatly thought!

Therefore do justice on thyself, and live;

Live above all most infinitely wretched.

Ismena too——Nay then, avenging Heav'n

ISMENA enters.

Has vented all its rage.——O wretched maid!

Why dost thou come to swell my raging grief?

"Why add to sorrows, and embitter woes?

"Why do thy mournful eyes upbraid my guilt."

H ij

Why thus recal to my afflicted soul
 The sad remembrance of my godlike son,
 Of that dear youth my cruelty has murder'd?
*O gods your reddest bolts of fire
 Had dealt less torment to my suff'ring frame
 Than that destructive word hath given my heart.
 Life yields beneath the sound.*

" *Ism.* Ruin'd! O all ye powers! O awful Theseus!
 " Say, where's my lord? say, where has fate dispos'd
 him?

" O speak! the fear distracts me.

" *Thes.* Gods! can I speak?

" Can I declare his fate to his Ismena!

" O lovely maid! couldst thou admit of comfort,

" Thou shouldst for ever be my only care,

" Work of my life, and labour of my soul.

" For thee alone my sorrows, lull'd, shall cease,

" Cease for a while to mourn my murder'd son;

" For thee alone my sword once more shall rage,

" Restore the crown of which it robb'd your race.

" Then let your grief give way to thoughts of empire;

" At thy own Athens reign. The happy crowd

" Beneath the easy yoke with pleasure bow,

" And think in thee their own Minerva reigns.

" *Ism.* Must I then reign, nay, must I live without
 him?

" Not so, O godlike youth! you lov'd Ismena:

" You, for her sake, refus'd the Cretan empire,

" And yet a nobler gift, the royal Phædra.

" Shall I then take a crown, a guilty crown,

"From the relentless hand that doom'd thy death?

"Oh! 'tis in death alone I can have ease,

"And thus I find it.

[*Offers to stab herself.*"]

HIPPOLITUS enters.

"*Hip.* O forbear, Ismena!

"Forbear, chaste maid, to wound thy tender bosom.

"O Heav'n and earth! should she resolve to die,

"And snatch all beauty from the widow'd earth?

"Was it for me, ye gods! she'd fall a victim?

"Was it for me she'd die? O heav'nly virgin!

Revive, Ismena,

Return to light, to happiness and love;

See, see thy own Hippolitus, who lives,

And hopes to live for thee.

Ism. Hippolitus!

"Am I alive or dead? Is this Elysium?

"'Tis he, 'tis all Hippolitus. Art well?

"Art thou not wounded?"

Thes. "O unhop'd for joy!"

Stand off, and let me fly into his arms.

Speak, say, what god, what miracle preserv'd thee?

Didst thou not strike thy father's cruel present,

My sword, into thy breast?

Hip. I aim'd it there,

But turn'd it from myself, and slew Cratander;

The guards, not trusted with his fatal orders,

Granted my wish, and brought me to the king.

I fear'd not death, but could not bear the thought

Of Theseus' sorrow, and Ismena's loss;

Therefore I hasten'd to your royal presence,
Here to receive my doom.

Thes. Be this thy doom,
To live for ever in Ismena's arms.
Go, heav'nly pair, and with your dazzling virtues,
Your courage, truth, your innocence and love,
Amaze and charm mankind ; and rule that empire,
For which in vain your rival fathers fought.

" Ism. O killing joy ! "

Hip. O ecstasy of bliss !
Am I possess'd at last of my Ismena ?
" Of that celestial maid, O pitying gods !
" How shall I thank your bounties for my suff'rings,
" For all my pains, and all the pangs I've borne ?
" Since 'twas to them I owe divine Ismena,
" To them I owe the dear consent of Theseus. "
Yet there's a pain lies heavy on my heart,
For the disastrous fate of hapless Phædra !

Thes. Deep was her anguish ; for the wrongs she
did you.

She chose to die, and in her death deplor'd
Your fate, and not her own.

" Hip. I've heard it all. " Unhappy Phædra !
" Oh ! had not passion sully'd her renown,
" None e'er on earth had shone with equal lustre !
" So glorious liv'd, or so lamented died.
" Her faults were only faults of raging love,
" Her virtues all her own.

" Ism. Unhappy Phædra !
" Was there no other way, ye pitying pow'rs,

"No other way to crown Ismena's love?

"Then must I ever mourn her cruel fate,

"And in the midst of my triumphant joy,

"Ev'n in my hero's arms, confess some sorrow."

Thes. "O tender maid! forbear with ill-tim'd grief,

"To damp our blessings, and incense the gods;"

But let's away, and pay kind Heav'n our thanks

For all the wonders in our favour wrought;

That Heav'n, whose mercy rescu'd erring Theseus

From execrable crimes, and endless woes.

Then learn from me, ye kings, that rule the world:

With equal poize let steady justice sway,

And flagrant crimes with certain vengeance pay,

But till the proofs are clear, the stroke delay.

"*Hip.* The righteous gods, that innocence require,

"Protect the goodness which themselves inspire;

"Unguarded virtue human arts defies,

"Th' accus'd is happy, while th' accuser dies."

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]



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EPILOGUE.

BY MR. PRIOR.

LADIES, to-night your pity I implore
For one who never troubled you before :
An Oxford man, extremely read in Greek,
Who from Eu—ripides makes Phædra speak ;
And comes to town to let us moderns know
How women lov'd two thousand years ago.
If that be all, said I, e'en burn your play,
Egad, we know all that as well as they :
Shew us the youthful handsome charioteer,
Firm in his seat, and running his career ;
Our souls would kindle with as gen'rous flames
As e'er inspir'd the ancient Grecian dames :
Ev'ry Ismena would resign her breast,
And ev'ry dear Hippolitus be blest.

But, as it is, six flouncing Flanders mares
Are e'en as good as any two of theirs ;
And if Hippolitus can but contrive
To buy the gilded chariot, John can drive.

Now of the bustle you have seen to-day,
And Phædra's morals in this scholar's play ;
Something, at last, in justice, should be said,
But this Hippolitus so fills one's head.—
Well ! Phædra liv'd as chastely as she cou'd,
For she was father Jove's own flesh and blood ;
Her aukward love, indeed, was oddly fated,
She and her Poly were too near related ;

*And yet that scruple had been laid aside,
If honest Theseus had but fairly dy'd :
But when he came, what needed he to know,
But that all matters stood in statu quo :
There was no harm, you see ; or grant there were,
She might want conduct, but he wanted care.
'Twas in a husband little less than rude,
Upon his wife's retirement to intrude :
He should have sent a night or two before,
That he would come exact at such an hour ;
Then he had turn'd all tragedy to jest,
Found ev'ry thing contribute to his rest ;
The picquet friend dismiss'd, the coast all clear,
And spouse alone, impatient for her dear.*

*But if these gay reflections come too late
To keep the guilty Phaedra from her fate,
If your more serious judgment must condemn
The dire effects of her unhappy flame ;
Yet, ye chaste matrons, and ye tender fair,
Let love and innocence engage your care ;
My spotless flames to your protection take,
And spare poor Phaedra for Ismena's sake.*

THE END.

